



LEAVES  
FROM A VICEROY'S NOTE-BOOK  
AND OTHER PAPERS



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THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN OF LORD CURZON ON HIS WAY  
TO ATTEND A CABINET MEETING

# LEAVES FROM A VICEROY'S NOTE-BOOK AND OTHER PAPERS

BY THE

MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON

K.G.

VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA  
1899-1904 AND 1904-1905

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales  
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,  
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,  
And winds and shadows fall toward the west.

J. ELROY FLECKER,  
*The Golden Journey to Samarkand.*

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## INTRODUCTION

A MELANCHOLY duty falls upon the literary executors of the late Lord Curzon in presenting to the public that gifted author's second volume of travel. For not only do we deeply regret that this task cannot be fulfilled by him whose individuality is stamped upon every page of his work; but we must also admit a sense of artistic loss that the hand of so brilliant a writer, of so careful a reviser, was not spared to arrange the chapters and to correct the proofs of this latest addition to the bibliography of travel.

Among Lord Curzon's literary remains, consisting of voluminous notes for some half-dozen books on widely different subjects which he had hoped some day to publish, we found a collection of essays, more or less completed, which were intended by him to form the sequel to his *Tales of Travel*. Two or three of these have, we believe, appeared in magazines or reviews; but we are unfortunately unable to discover where or when they were published or to whom we should make suitable acknowledgement for their reproduction. We trust that this omission will, therefore, be forgiven by those to whom our thanks are due.

Many of the papers included in this volume were written hurriedly and in pencil, at dates which cannot be accurately ascertained; they were certainly never revised for the press by their author. It may easily be, therefore, that owing to incomplete preparation, to instances of obliteration of the MS. in some cases and to illegibility in others, errors will here and there be detected and a partial lack of that final polish which was so characteristic of everything that Lord Curzon wrote.

Even as they stand, however, we commend these stories with confidence to those whose preferences in modern reading lie in the direction of travel and adventure. We commend them for their charm, their gaiety, their information and their style—a quartette of literary virtues which never fail to fascinate, especially when they are combined so happily as in the present volume. And, in addition, they give to the reader a delightful portrait of the author—a man of wide sympathies, of subtle perceptions, of genial humour, whose powers of observation and of descriptive writing were never more congenially employed than when he was keeping these faithful records of his journeyings abroad.

F. W. PEMBER.

IAN MALCOLM.

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LEAVES FROM  
A VICEROY'S NOTE-BOOK



## I

### A SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE

They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.

SHAKESPEARE, *Love's Labour Lost*, Act V. Sc. 1.

NEVER shall I forget my Viceregal visit to Goa, still the capital of the Portuguese possessions in India, as it has been ever since the famous Alfonso de Albuquerque made his triumphal entry into the older city on 17th February 1510. During the succeeding century the name of Goa was a synonym throughout the Eastern world for all that was fastidious in ostentation and refulgent in splendour. The Portuguese power, resting on the double basis of a dominant military organisation and a wealthy and proselytising church, presented a gorgeous external façade, though infected with the germs of an early and inevitable decay. Luxury, profligacy, and a complete lack of the colonising and even the commercial spirit sapped the structure which had been so easily and brilliantly reared. With the fall of the Portuguese Empire, its outlying possessions dwindled and decayed, the territory was invaded, internal revolutions were frequent, and Goa sank into a swift and irremediable decline.

The old town of Goa, five miles higher up the river

than the modern capital, was abandoned, and is now the site only of a few fine churches, in one of which the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, is interred in a magnificent tomb. In buildings half as large as St. Paul's, services are still kept up by a handful of native Catholic priests for a congregation that is non-existent, and the vestries and chapels are packed with inestimable treasures in vestments, sacramental plate, and other works of art. Otherwise, except when the great church festivals are held, and the body of the saint, at rare intervals, is exposed to view, old Goa is a deserted city, where the relics of bygone splendour are gripped by the encroaching jungle, and the towers of the empty churches spring from a forest of palms. Still, however, at the head of the road leading up from the river stands the great archway under which each new Governor-General on assuming office has to pass on his way to Bom Jesus, where he is inducted into his office with a service during which he holds the staff that at other times is borne by the effigy of St. Francis, which stands on the altar before his shrine.

At about the time when George III. was ascending the British Throne, the ruin of old Goa was already so far advanced that the capital was moved to a site a few miles lower down the river and in more convenient proximity to its mouth ; and there, at Panjim or New Goa, the seat of government of the shrunken Portuguese dominions in India has ever since been placed.

Lord Ripon was the only Viceroy before myself who had ever been to Goa, and that in an unofficial



*Exclusive News Agency.*

THE RUINS OF THE FAMOUS COLLEGE OF ST. PAUL, GOA  
originally the Franciscan College of Santa Fé, used by St. Francis Xavier as a training school for Native missionaries

1

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capacity. My visit was official; and my host was the Governor-General of Portuguese India, who extended a lavish hospitality to Lady Curzon and myself.

The visit was marked by incidents, both rehearsed and unrehearsed, which were not without amusing features. The Portuguese Government had provided a gunboat to take us from the port of Mormugao up the river to the town. But they had not made sufficient allowance—whether it was for the shallowness of the channel or the lack of skilled navigation of the vessel, I never clearly ascertained. Anyhow, we lay for an interminable time in mid-stream immediately off the town, where bands and crowds and guards were to be seen in full view waiting to receive us, while our boat had slowly and laboriously to be warped to the landing-stage. At length we stepped ashore amid every demonstration of enthusiastic welcome from the assembled multitude.

We were presently conducted to a two-horsed equipage in which, preceded by a band and surrounded by a sort of body-guard, we made the slow circuit of the beflagged and crowded streets. I use the word "circuit" advisedly, for it was not till after a little time that I realised, from the astonishing similarity of the *mise en scène*, that we were going steadily round and round the same streets; in order, I suppose, to sustain the illusion of a more extended city and a larger population. During this procession the salutations of the female portion of the inhabitants who were clustered on the balconies of the houses, whence they threw flowers into the carriage,



were appropriated with much gallantry by the Portuguese A.D.C., who was attached to us, and who occupied a seat in the vehicle. Throwing kisses in bouquets to the feminine beauties of Goa, he was undoubtedly the hero of the hour.

This ceremony over, we drove out to a house, or palace, belonging to the Governor-General on a wooded cape at the mouth of the river, where every effort had been made to entertain us in royal fashion. Baths, of the type favoured by the British in India, being unknown at Goa, a special bath-tub, resembling a wine vat of gargantuan proportions, had been imported for the occasion; and, there being no bathroom in the house, it was placed in the corner of the drawing-room, where the removal of the spigot discharged its contents straight on to the floor.

The heat was suffocating, and when we drove to the state dinner at the Town Palace of the Governor-General, I thought we should almost have expired. Even the staff in their white ducks nearly dissolved under the strain. Afternoon tea with floods of sweet champagne had been a penance; but the sufferings of the banquet, in an immensely long narrow room adorned with full-length portraits of previous Governors-General from the famous Albuquerque downwards, were unimaginable.

The difficulties, or shall I say the humours, of the situation were not diminished by the fact that none of the Portuguese officials spoke a word either of English or French, while none of my party understood a word of Portuguese. This disability did

not, however, prevent an exchange of the liveliest conversation—not the less charming because wholly unintelligible—throughout the repast. At length the Governor-General rose to propose my health, and, in an admirable speech, loudly applauded by the whole of the audience, though unfortunately “Greek” to us, descanted upon the historical alliance between Portugal and Great Britain, and the compliment of my visit. I rose to reply, and made a speech which was equally unintelligible to the vast majority of my hearers, though warmly cheered by my own staff, who alone had any idea of what I was saying.

But here occurred the unexpected and stupefying finale. In the latter part of my speech, I, who did not know a word of the language, broke suddenly into fluent Portuguese, and, amid a storm of applause, delivered a glowing and impassioned Portuguese peroration. The audience leaped to their feet and shouted themselves hoarse with delight, and I certainly achieved a triumph in an unknown tongue far greater than any I have ever won in my own. What was the explanation? Half-way through the banquet I made the agreeable discovery that the Portuguese lady who sat on my right hand had been educated in an English-speaking school, or convent, in the Portuguese possession of Macao near Canton in China. Realising at once the immense possibilities of the situation, I besought her assistance, and, writing down on a paper, unobserved, the later portions of my intended speech, I prevailed upon her to translate them into

Portuguese and to teach me *sotto voce* the correct pronunciation. Nobly did she perform her part, and not inadequately, I am fain to believe, did I accomplish mine. Anyhow it was her fair hand that placed upon my brow the crown of an otherwise imperfect oratorical career.

## II

### CHEERS

Oft-times nothing profits more  
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right  
Well managed.

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Book VIII. 571.

AN incident occurred at a meeting which I attended in India that suggested to me quite a new train of thought, and a possible innovation in public life.

We are familiar with the spectacle of the Guest of Honour at a public banquet in England, who sits, his face suffused with self-conscious blushes, while his health is being proposed, and the most extravagant compliments are paid to his virtues or abilities or career. Then, when the glasses are raised in his honour, he bows in deprecatory response to the salutations of the company. His attitude throughout is one of modest detachment, as though he were gazing from a distance on the spectacle of his own apotheosis.

On the Continent the thing is done in a less exclusive and more convivial way. The guest, when his health is drunk, frequently rises himself, clinks glasses with his neighbours, and joins, in a spirit of effusive good temper, in the general chorus of congratulation.

But why not carry it a step further ? If he is conscious of the justice of the plaudits, why should he not take part in them ? If he is convinced that he is " a jolly good fellow ", why not join in proclaiming it ? If the company insists on shouting " And so say all of us ", why should he be the sole absentee from the chorus ?

The late Duke of Devonshire, when Lord Hartington, is reported on one occasion to have paused and yawned in the middle of one of his own speeches in the House of Commons ; and, when asked why he had done so, to have replied that he was so bored. But why stop there ? If a man may yawn at himself or even laugh at himself—as some people rather enjoy doing—why not applaud himself also ? Why leave to other people a monopoly of the cheers ?

These reflections were suggested to me by the experience in question. One of the most famous incidents of the Indian Mutiny was the heroic conduct of the small party at the Delhi Telegraph Office on the fateful morning of 11th May 1857, when, upon the arrival of the mutinous Sepoys from Meerut, murder and pillage broke out in the imperial city. The scene is thus described in a well-known history of the Mutiny :

In the telegraph office outside the city a young signaller named Brendish was standing, with his hand upon the signalling apparatus. Beside him was his fellow-signaller, Pilkington ; and Mrs. Todd, the widow of their chief, who had been murdered a few hours before, was there too with her child. They heard the uproar and the rattle of musketry ; and native messengers brought news of the

atrocities that were being enacted in the city. Flashed up the wires to Umballa, to Lahore, to Rawalpindi and to Peshawar, this message warned the authorities of the Punjab, "We must leave office. All the bungalows are on fire, burning down by the Sepoys from Meerut. They came in this morning. We are off." More fortunate than their countrymen in the city, the boys, with their helpless charge, were in time to escape the fate which, in the performance of their duty, they had dared.<sup>1</sup>

Forty-five years later, when I was Viceroy, I was invited to unveil a monument, which had been erected to commemorate this service of the Delhi Telegraphic Staff, on a spot within a few hundred yards of the scene of the original deed. Having ascertained that Brendish, one of the brave trio, was still living—Todd having, as already pointed out, been killed in the early morning of that terrible day and Pilkington having died about ten years later—I wrote to King Edward and asked him if he would authorise me to present the medal of the Victorian Order to Brendish at the ceremonial. The King gladly assented, and accordingly it was my proud privilege to pin the medal upon the veteran's breast.

When I entered the enclosure I saw Brendish, an old man with a flowing grey beard, seated a little below the platform on the right. He was in a state of considerable but legitimate excitement.

In my speech I described the incident of 1857, and made some general observations on the policy of commemorating such events. I had already in my

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Indian Mutiny*, by T. Rice Holmes, fifth edition, 1898, p. 100.

opening remarks referred with satisfaction to the old man as still present among us, and I had noted that this observation was received with loud "Hear, hears" by him. But when I came to present the medal, and again singled him out as "the sole survivor of those immortal days", and as "this old and faithful servant, who had helped to save the British Empire in India nearly half a century ago", the veteran rose in his place and led the enthusiastic cheers of the audience.

It was all very simple and natural and touching. There was no trace of vanity or self-assertion in the action of the old man. He was cheering the memories of the past; his dead companions; the Indian Telegraph Service as a whole; and if incidentally at the same time he was cheering himself, why not? He was the sole survivor and there was no one else left to be cheered.

But I could not help thinking that the precedent, if adopted elsewhere, might lend a new savour to public life. It might even be carried a stage further. For a man might be permitted to cheer not merely the references to himself made in the speeches of other people, but his own speech as well. It would soon become a very popular practice; for the speaker, whether in the House of Commons or on the platform, would be entirely independent of the suffrages of his audience. He would never notice their possible failure to appreciate his efforts, since their silence would be drowned in his own applause. By this simple device every one would be pleased. The speaker would be gratified, for he would get his

cheers ; the audience would be relieved because there would be no obligation on them to define their attitude ; and no interest would suffer. I have ever since felt inclined to commend this innovation to the politicians at home.

As a friend of mine, who is very fond of quoting Tennyson, remarked, when I passed on the suggestion to him :

Cheers, idle cheers ! I know now what they mean !  
Cheers, for which once I craved in deep despair,  
Rise in the throat and gather to the tongue  
In looking on the happy audience  
Who, since I cheer myself, need cheer no more !



### III

## THE SIKH WAY

Well, honour is the subject of my story.

SHAKSPEARE, *Julius Caesar*, Act I. Sc. 2.

Life every man holds dear ; but the brave man  
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

SHAKSPEARE, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V. Sc. 3.

THE standards of personal or family honour and self-respect that prevail among the Sikh community in India are of a very rigid and uncompromising character. Indeed they recall in some respects the ethical code that even in quite modern times has justified the practice of *hara-kiri* in Japan, and that inspired the immortal tragedy of the Forty-Seven Ronin.

A Sikh will not only take life, but will freely give up his own life, sooner than that an ineffaceable stain should rest upon his family escutcheon. I came across several instances of this remarkable trait while in India, of which I will relate the following.

There were four brothers, Sikhs, who were small landowners in a village in the Native State of Patiala in the Punjab. The two elder were soldiers in the Indian Army, where they both bore exemplary characters as quiet and well-behaved men. The two younger brothers stayed at home, and culti-

vated the family land, which was not inconsiderable in extent. They were, however, continually harassed by their maternal relatives, who turned beasts into their crops when green, or went in and cut them when ripe, in the hope of driving the brothers out of their holding, and forcing them to leave the village, in which case the land would have devolved upon the usurpers as nearest of kin. The two soldier brothers were being constantly obliged to take leave in order to protect their interests. But endless *makadmas* (lawsuits) brought them no relief, the maternal relatives forming an overwhelmingly strong faction against the brothers, who had no local following.

At length the soldier brothers decided to bring matters to a head ; but before doing so they made a final appeal to their persecutors. Attar Singh, one of the two soldiers, laid his turban at the feet of his principal enemies and implored them to desist from further hostility ; but in reply he only met with abuse. He then returned to his military station, sent for his brother, obtained four days' leave for both, and collected a revolver and sword and as much ammunition as he could procure.

The brothers arrived at the village, and announced that they had come to fight it out. They then opened fire upon the opposite faction, and in the course of the conflict that ensued, killed seventeen persons and wounded ten, the result being that the entire clique of maternal relatives—women as well as men—were wiped out.

It remained only to complete the work of com-

bined murder and self-sacrifice. The four brothers then mounted to their house-top, whence they sent word to the police station that they wanted to die fighting and would not be taken alive ; and accordingly that they were waiting for a *fauj* to come and finish them off. The police having declined the hazardous invitation, the second brother, Attar Singh, saying that his work was done, did public *shinan* (purification), and then sat down and made his elder brother, Ruttan Singh, shoot him through the head.

The latter then remembered that he had a private enemy in the same native regiment, against whom he had to pay off some old score. He accordingly descended, sought out his enemy, and inflicted upon him a severe sword cut and two bullet wounds. He would have killed him if he could.

Having thus satisfied his honour to the full, he returned to the house-top and resumed his seat with his two surviving brothers, the other villagers continuing to supply them with food and water, though not permitted to come near. After two more days Ruttan Singh then did *shinan* for himself, and made one of the two surviving brothers shoot him dead.

The latter, who were not soldiers, and perhaps were allowed to have a less sensitive feeling of honour, then came down and disappeared.

The remarkable feature of the story was that though these men had completely annihilated the whole of their maternal relatives, their conduct was in no sense reprobated by their fellow-countrymen. On the contrary, the entire community looked upon

the tragedy as having been conducted in a most seemly manner, *coram publico*. Justice had in fact been satisfied all round.

Perhaps this little anecdote, which is true, will explain to some of the readers of this book why even in the twentieth century it is not always wise or desirable to apply Western criteria to the behaviour of Eastern peoples.

## IV

### HYMNS

Psalms and hymns and songs of praise. (Cf. Hymns A. and M. 297).

If I reprehend anything in the world, it is a nice derangement of epitaphs.—R. B. SHERIDAN, *The Rivals*, Act. III. Sc. 3.

THE choice of hymns for any public service or ceremonial is a task of no small importance. For on the one hand we are all apt to choose our favourite hymns, less perhaps because of the words they contain than of the tune to which they are commonly sung; and secondly, many excellent hymns contain some astonishingly bad or foolish lines. Take, for instance, the well-known line in a popular hymn :

Happy birds that sing and fly,

or again, the amazing bathos of the lines :

How the troops of Midian  
Prowl and prowl around.

But an even greater snare lurks in the occurrence in a hymn of some allusion that strikes a note of unpremeditated incongruity or innuendo. I remember, for instance, when I was a boy at Eton, and when Dr. Warre, afterwards Headmaster and Provost, was a housemaster, how on Sundays in the College

Chapel, where he would be seated in a stall, we used to revel in the hymn, two lines of which run :

When comes the promised time  
That War(re) shall be no more ?

Dr. Warre was an exceedingly and deservedly popular master. But no charge either of irrelevance or irreverence could rob the 600 boys of the exquisite delight of allowing the choir to sing in almost inaudible tones the opening words of the above verse, and then shouting themselves hoarse in a full-throated chorus on the second line. This became such a scandal that the hymn had eventually to be barred. On the other hand, it was said that, when the meetings of the Governing Body were going to be held, Mr. E. C. Austen Leigh, who had a caustic vein of humour, used, when Lower Master, deliberately to select for the occasion in Lower School Chapel the well-known hymn :

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.

When in India I narrowly escaped a serious catastrophe arising out of the incautious selection of a hymn. The Great Durbar was being held at Delhi in January 1903 to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII. For the Sunday morning I had arranged a church service to be celebrated on the open polo ground—which was the only space large enough to hold a congregation that included several thousand British troops. The visitors at the Durbar, among whom were the Duke and

Duchess of Connaught and the Grand Duke of Hesse, then a reigning Prince, were assembled on the ground and in the grand stand. A choir of 500 male voices was massed on a great sloping bank 300 yards away, and sang from there through megaphones, the words being taken up by the troops below and by the congregation, numbering over 15,000 persons.

In making the arrangements I consulted Lord Kitchener, who was Commander-in-Chief, as to the particular hymn which the British Tommy would be most likely to sing with hearty vigour, and he unhesitatingly replied, "Onward! Christian Soldiers." This seemed to me an admirable choice, even if it did not accurately reflect the theological attitude of the average British soldier, until in a fortunate moment I remembered that one of the verses begins thus :

Crowns and thrones may perish,  
Kingdoms rise and wane.

This couplet depicts not merely a familiar contingency, but also a truth of abundant historical justification. But, as a note of rejoicing at the coronation of a monarch in the presence of his near relatives, it might have been thought inappropriate, if not disrespectful, and I was doubtful how it would be regarded by King Edward when he heard of it. So I passed my pencil through the Commander-in-Chief's choice, and selected some more innocent strophe.

A special danger seems indeed to lurk in this hymn and in this particular verse, the next succeed-

ing lines of which run thus :

Gates of hell can never  
'Gainst that Church prevail.

For on one occasion a choir-master, instructing his pupils how to sing the verse, said : " Now, remember ; only the trebles sing down to the Gates of Hell—and then you all come in."

But it is not only on occasions of ceremonial that such dangers are likely to arise. When a young lady chooses a hymn which she would like to have sung on the occasion of her marriage, she should be peculiarly careful to look through it in advance, and make sure that it responds fully to the needs of the case. I had a young female relative, who with insufficient caution chose as her favourite for the wedding service the hymn which begins

Days and moments quickly flying  
Blend the living with the dead.

All went well till the end of the second line, albeit the choice of hymn seemed not particularly apposite and rather unnecessarily lugubrious. But when the congregation came to the succeeding lines,

Soon shall you and I be lying  
Each within our narrow bed,

I am afraid that they broke into titters of irrepressible merriment.

Not even the most exalted are immune from these dangers ; for I remember reading that, at the wedding ceremony of King Edward and Queen



Alexandra, a discarded funeral march of Handel was played with much effect on the organ.

A less grave but still an untimely pitfall was only avoided at another wedding, when the officiating clergyman, on turning up the hymn which he had been invited by the bridegroom to announce, was confronted with—

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
However dark it be.

A not dissimilar though more auspicious incident occurred while I was in Calcutta. A worthy doctor was about to be espoused to a young lady in the closing days of the year; and the parents of the bride, thinking that it would be both charming and economical to take advantage of the Christmas decoration of the cathedral, sought and received the permission of the Bishop to have the ceremony performed there. The congregation was assembled; the bridegroom was in his place; the bridal procession moved slowly up the nave, when, as the happy couple took their stand below the altar steps, both they and the congregation suddenly realised that emblazoned in front of them in huge frosted white letters on a scarlet background, across the entire width of the cathedral, ran the opening words of Isaiah ix. 6. It is true that the original author of these words was a prophet; but no prophecy of even the most gifted of seers could have anticipated this particular connotation.

I was myself the victim of another but quite harmless illustration of the same thesis at Simla.

On the hill on which stands Viceregal Lodge there was a very small chapel, the survival of an earlier day, where service was sometimes conducted by the station chaplain on Sunday afternoon. On one occasion, during the monsoon, when the whole place was enveloped in mist and fog, with occasional violent downpours of rain, I attended the service with my A.D.C., only to find that the sole other occupant of the building was the chaplain. Nevertheless he bravely pursued his task, without omitting a line or even a comma, and we three went through the entire service, including the hymns and canticles, undaunted. At length we came to the sermon, which I fondly hoped we might be spared. Not a bit ! The chaplain, who could have had no idea that I was likely to attend, had a favourite address on Dives and Lazarus, which he proceeded to read from a well-thumbed MS. His version was even an improvement upon the original. For he modernised Dives, and depicted him as living in great style in a castle on the top of a hill (Viceregal Lodge was on the highest point of the hill only 200 yards away) ; as wearing smart clothes (the Viceroy has not infrequently to put on uniform and other gorgeous raiment) ; and as enjoying good meals every day (the fare at Government House was by no means bad). He then referred to the poor man Lazarus as lying at the gate (the Gurkha Gate to the Viceregal grounds was just below), and as being fed with the crumbs from the rich man's table (I had often seen the native servants taking away the scraps from the Viceregal kitchen, to give to their families). And

then he asked the congregation, *i.e.* my A.D.C. and myself, to think seriously of Dives' sins, of his subsequent torment in hell, and of the just reproaches of Father Abraham in heaven. We both bore it quite meekly, and, at the close of the service, my A.D.C. not having a singing voice, the chaplain and I sang with great fervour the concluding hymn, in which I joined with all the greater unction when I found that by a happy coincidence it contained these consolatory words :

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
*God made them, high or lowly,*  
*And ordered their estate.*

## V

### HORSES

Give me another horse ! bind up my wounds !

SHAKESPEARE, *King Richard III.*, Act V. Sc. 8.

Better an ass that carries than a horse that throws.—*Proverb.*

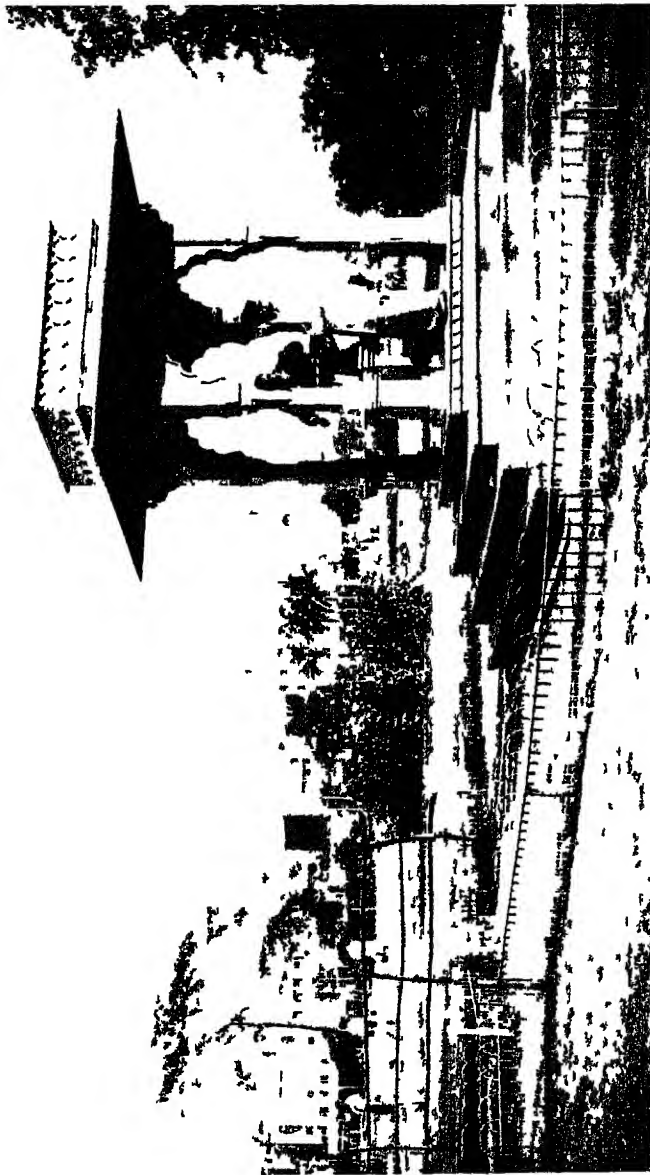
ONE of the anxieties inseparable from any office requiring frequent external ceremonial—such as the holding of reviews and parades, street processions, and the like—is lest the animal which is ridden by the chief actor should comport itself in a manner unworthy of the situation and the office.

In London I have seen several catastrophes on such occasions either experienced or but narrowly escaped. I remember how on the occasion of the first Jubilee of Queen Victoria a near relative of the Royal Family, to whom a friend had lent what was reported to be a particularly safe mount, was deposited on the ground with great violence before the procession had passed Constitution Hill, and failed in consequence to appear at the Abbey.

I recall the funeral procession of King Edward, when the corpulent form of Ferdinand of Bulgaria had to be held up on his horse by two men walking on either side of the bridle, lest a similar disaster should befall their royal master. I remember the

pictures of King Peter of Serbia, on his coronation day at Belgrade, being similarly sustained on his horse, lest the royal crown and sceptre, together with the royal form, should be mingled with the dust. From my windows in Carlton House Terrace I have often seen the horses ridden by grooms following the troops back from the rehearsals of the trooping of the colour on the Horse Guards Parade, in order that on the actual day these animals might not betray their more eminent riders. Even in distant Korea I recall the spectacle of the chief Court dignitaries, on their way to the palace at Söul, propped up by running attendants on the small ponies which they bestrode, lest perchance they should slip to the ground.

When I went to India, I was a little disconcerted by terrifying stories of the experiences that had befallen some of my predecessors. One of them, when holding the New Year's parade on the Maidan at Calcutta, was already in his position, mounted, and in full sight of the enormous crowd, when suddenly the rattle of the *feu de joie*, running along the long line of troops, caused his steed to start; off fell his *topé* and was caught by the strap round his neck; and in this absurd plight he was carried at full gallop across the parade ground until arrested by the "thin red line of heroes" on the far side. Another Viceroy narrowly escaped a similar fate; for Lady Canning records in one of her letters that, her husband having mounted her own horse Tortoiseshell for a military parade at Barrackpore, the animal so misbehaved that he had to exchange



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A CORNER OF THE MANDAL CHURCH



horses with an A.D.C. in the middle of the royal salute, for fear of a catastrophe. Yet another Viceroy, taking advantage of the option so appositely pointed out by the Psalmist, that "some put their trust in chariots and some in horses", had solved the difficulty or escaped the peril by not merely eschewing horseback, and attending the parade in a landau, but by having the animals taken out of the vehicle when he arrived on the ground, so that his security was beyond risk.

On one such occasion I had a piece of great good luck myself, for, intending to ride a new horse at the parade, I sent a groom out on him at the rehearsal two days before. The *feu de joie* was too much for the animal, particularly at 7.30 A.M. in the morning, when the air is very crisp and the temperature low, and the rider met his fate on *terra firma*.

The *feu de joie* was indeed looked forward to by the spectators at the annual parade at Calcutta with almost delirious expectation, particularly if the Admiral of the East India Squadron and his staff, who used to come up the river in the flagship at Christmas time, were attending the function, as they were always bidden to do. The scene was apt to be diverting. But I record that on one occasion one of my Admirals and the whole of his staff, on a very "jumpy" morning, sat their steeds like centaurs when the ordeal came, and covered themselves with an undying renown.

In official entries on horseback into a city or town, the moment of greatest anxiety was when one came opposite the massed school-children, who



would suddenly start cheering in the shrillest of staccato voices. It required a very steady animal to stand this sudden shock, and the rider had to be prepared for exceptional capers.

When the preparations were being made for the Great Durbar of 1st January 1903, which was to include a review of 40,000 troops on a sandy plain outside Delhi, at which the Viceroy, accompanied by the Duke of Connaught and the Grand Duke of Hesse, was to take the salute, it was thought desirable that a charger of exceptional distinction should be procured for him. My Acting Commander-in-Chief was nothing loth to serve me in this respect, and magnanimously surrendered to me a magnificent chestnut "waler", well over seventeen hands in height, and of splendid appearance. Mounted on this noble animal, which was named "Coronation" in honour of the occasion (we were celebrating the Coronation of King Edward VII.), I successfully passed through the ceremonies of the morning, though I remember that "Coronation", being unused to the experience of standing out alone in the open, kept edging backwards to join the horses with their royal riders standing immediately behind. I used to ride him sometimes afterwards; and, when I left India, I parted with him to a General Officer who commanded one of the principal Indian armies.

Some years afterwards, meeting this officer in England, I asked him how he had fared with "Coronation". "Have you never heard?" was his mournful reply. "The brute laid me on my back on the parade ground in full sight of all the

troops at P——r.” “But how did that come about?” I asked. “Did you not know”, was the reply, “that he was famous for this performance, which he had successfully executed at the expense of the Acting Commander-in-Chief before he parted with him to you?” “No, indeed”, I said, regretting much that that gallant commander was no longer under my orders, to receive a becoming expression of my gratitude; “and what was the sequel?” “I parted with him”, said the General, “without a pang, and he has doubtless treated other Generals in the same manner since. But”, he added, “happening to see the diary of my son, who was my A.D.C. on that fateful occasion, lying open on his desk, I glanced at the entry on that date, in order to see how he had dealt with the parental misfortune :

“ ‘ January 1, 19—.—Proclamation Parade—Father came off all right ’ was the somewhat ambiguous but laconic entry.”

I was shown the scene of a similar catastrophe at Imphal, the capital town of Manipur in the far East of India. The General commanding the forces in Bengal and Assam had come up to that remote spot to inspect the garrison; and the entire population of the town was assembled on the polo ground, which is bounded at the two ends by a broad shallow ditch, across which the goals are struck, and on the low bank above which the native inhabitants sit or stand to watch the show. The gallant General’s steed, overcome by the firing of the salute or the cheering of the crowd, retreated steadily backwards and

eventually discharged its rider amid great applause into the ditch.

Such incidents are not uncommon in a country where a good deal of the locomotion, apart from ceremonies, requires to be performed on horseback, sometimes by persons who have had no great training or experience in equitation. I recall two such that happened at Simla in my time.

The station chaplain, who was about to take to himself a wife, sought and received my permission to have the ceremony performed at noon in a little chapel of ease that stood on Observatory Hill close to Viceregal Lodge. I was seated at work in my room, when I heard that, just as the reverend gentleman, attired for the ceremony, was riding through the Gurkha Gate that led into the Viceregal grounds, the 12 o'clock gun, which stood under a gun shed hard by, went off—and so did he. He was reported as lying on the ground in a condition that scarcely fitted him for the impending function. The remedy was obvious. Without hesitation I sent down an A.D.C. with a bottle of champagne, a copious libation of which at once restored the prostrate bridegroom to his senses, and enabled the bride within half an hour to change her name.

The other incident befell one of my most esteemed colleagues in Council, a gentleman who, never having bestridden a horse until he came out to India, nevertheless regarded it as an obligation of honour to ride, as did all his colleagues, to the meetings of Council at Viceregal Lodge.

The journey, which was a long one from the other

end of the Ridge, was pursued at a snail's pace, a native syce running alongside in order to be prepared for any sudden collapse on the part of the rider. If one met the latter so engaged, it was with the utmost difficulty, and only at great personal risk, that he could raise his left hand to salute. It was reported that on one occasion he was met by a friend who, ignoring his air of concentrated anxiety, asked him a question. "Don't speak", he said; "can't you see that I am busy riding?"

At last the inevitable catastrophe occurred. The Members of Council were assembled in the Council Chamber for the weekly Cabinet meeting. I was waiting to go in. Ten minutes, fifteen minutes passed, and our eminent colleague did not appear! I told an A.D.C. to mount and gallop down the hill, searching the roadside as he went. Sure enough, there he found the unlucky equestrian, whom the syce had failed to catch as he made his sudden descent; he was lying on the road, severely battered, while his astonished steed stood patiently at his side. The Government of India had to do without a Member for that particular department for more than three weeks.

## VI

### THE MUTINY VETERANS

*DELHI, 1st January 1903*

To-day, across our fathers' graves,  
The astonished years reveal  
The remnant of that desperate host  
Which cleansed our East with steel.

Hail and farewell ! We greet you here,  
With tears that none will scorn—  
O Keepers of the House of old,  
Or ever we were born !

RUDYARD KIPLING, "The Veterans".

By 11 o'clock, when a bugle sounded, the great arena was cleared. Every seat was occupied in the vast horseshoe amphitheatre, built in imitation of the Moghul style, with Saracenic arches, and light cupolas tipped with gold. Painted a creamy white, it shone like some fairy palace of marble in the fierce light of the Indian sun.

There might be seen the Princes of India, ablaze with jewels and in their most splendid raiment ; behind them, a curtained box hid from the public gaze their wives and female relatives. There were the representatives of foreign states, of Japan, Siam, Afghanistan, Muscat and Nepal, of the French and Portuguese possessions in India, and of the British Overseas Dominions of South Africa and

Australia. There were picturesque figures from the hill states that skirt the Chinese frontier, from the Persian borderland and the coasts of Arabia, and from the snowy passes of the Hindu Kush. There were the Members of the Governor-General's Council, the Governors of the Presidencies and Provinces, the Commander-in-Chief and his staff, and countless civil and military officers, all in brilliant uniforms. There were the High Court Judges in their state robes and full-bottomed wigs ; and there also was a crowd of distinguished guests from all parts of India and from England. Seats were found for 13,500 persons ; as many more stood. Out on the plain, through the two points of the horseshoe, could be seen in the near distance the serried ranks of the massed battalions in close formation, 40,000 strong ; and behind them was a tall mound, packed from foot to summit with thousands of native spectators. In the centre of the amphitheatre the imperial flag floated at a height of 100 feet in the air. Round its base were massed the bands of twelve regiments that had won glory in the campaigns of the Mutiny, nearly half a century before. The dais, in the inner hollow of the horseshoe, surmounted by a domed pavilion directly copied from a building of Akbar at Agra, awaited its Royal and Viceregal occupants. At the sound of the bugle a sudden hush fell upon the whole assembly.

Then was seen a spectacle that will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it, that brought tears to the eyes of strong men and a choking in every throat. Preceded by a military band, there walked

into the arena, in irregular formation, with no attempt at parade or symmetry, a group, a knot, a straggling company, of old or elderly men. Nearly all were grey-headed or white-haired, many were bowed with years, and were with difficulty supported by their comrades or by younger officers who conducted them round. In front marched a little knot of Europeans, headed by a splendid veteran, Colonel A. R. Mackenzie, C.B. Some were in stained and dilapidated uniforms, others in every variety of civil dress ; but there was not a bosom that did not glitter with the medals that both explained their presence and bespoke their glory.

Behind them walked, and in some cases tottered, a cluster of Sikh veterans, many with long white beards, clad entirely in white.

The entire procession consisted of between 300 and 400 men, of whom the great majority were Indians, and a small minority of less than 30, Europeans and Eurasians.

They were the veterans of the Mutiny, the survivors of that great drama of mingled tragedy and heroism, the officers and non-commissioned officers who had borne a part in the immortal episodes of Delhi and Lucknow, the men but for whom the Imperial Durbar would never have been held.

As they made their way slowly round the broad track of the arena, to which none had hitherto been admitted but themselves, the entire audience, European and Indian, rose to their feet and greeted them with long and tumultuous cheering ; but when the proud strains of "See the Conquering Hero comes",

to which the veterans had entered, and in response to which they drew themselves erect and marched with firm step, were succeeded by the wailing pathos of "Auld Lang Syne", there was audible sobbing both of men and women, and many in that vast audience broke down. One brave old fellow, quite blind, was led by a younger comrade : he turned his sightless orbs towards the cheering, and feebly saluted. It was his last salute ; for the excitement was too much for him, and on the morrow he died. At length the old men were all conducted to their seats in the amphitheatre, and the stage was set for the principal scene.

I was gratified at the success of the venture ; for when I planned and announced it beforehand, there had been many critics, particularly at a distance, who condemned the proposal as striking a jarring note on a day of rejoicing, and as reviving memories that ought to be forgotten. No such view was entertained by a single person, European or Indian, at Delhi : the Indians themselves regarded the invitation as the greatest of honours ; and many, who were present at the scene I have described, declared it to be the supreme moment of the Durbar.

I would gladly have summoned all, of whatever position or rank, from every part of India, who had fought on the British side in the Mutiny. But when it appeared on examination that there were over 1400 of these, many of them living in remote parts of India, distant many days' journey from Delhi, the idea had to be abandoned, and I was obliged to confine the invitation to the list before mentioned.



Two days after the Durbar the veterans paraded again in front of my headquarters in the Central Camp, where, at their own instance, they presented me with an address of thanks, which is one of my most treasured possessions.

## VII

### THE INSTALLATION

O what a fall was there, my countrymen !

SHAKSPEARE, *Julius Caesar*, Act III. Sc. 2.

AMONG the duties which the Viceroy is sometimes called upon to perform in India is the installation of a Ruling Chief or Prince on the *gadi*, or, as it is called if he be a Mohammedan, the *musnud*, of his state. I installed three young princes in my time. The occasion is one for the utmost pageantry, and for great rejoicing in the state concerned. The ceremony itself usually takes place in the Durbar Hall of the palace, before an immense concourse of the nobles and ministers of the state and a large assemblage of European officers and guests. Outside are ranged the state elephants, all magnificently caparisoned and with their heads and trunks fantastically painted in every hue of vermilion and saffron and gamboge. The state regalia are plentifully displayed, every servant of the state has a new livery or dress for the occasion, and coloured silks, satins, and velvets provide a sumptuous background to ropes of emeralds, rubies, and pearls. The Viceroy, after being escorted to the dais, delivers a speech or allocution of friendly advice and encouragement

to the young man, who duly responds. A good deal of the remainder of the visit is devoted to banquets, entertainments, and visits to institutions, and very likely, if the opportunity offers, to *shikar*. But before any of these functions or amusements can take place, there is always a preliminary exchange of formal visits between the Viceroy and the Chief, at which a consecrated and rigid etiquette is faithfully observed. The Chief calls upon his guest at an early hour after the arrival of the latter. A little later the Viceroy returns the call, and the number of guns, the strength of the escort, the details of the reception, and the offerings made or exchanged are prescribed with the most scrupulous precision.

As a rule the *bundobust* is magnificent, and the arrangements proceed with clockwork regularity. But occasionally a little grit will get into even the best-oiled machinery, or some unforeseen and laughable incident will occur. On one occasion, just as the Viceroy's procession was about to start for the palace, my solar *topé* could nowhere be found. It was too hot to drive through the streets in a grey top-hat, and my native servant confessed that he had packed up the *topé* and left it at the station. Mounted men were sent galloping down, while I fumed and waited. At length the missing head-piece arrived. But my "bearer", not thinking that he would be detected, had wrapped it up inside a cooking tin, from which it emerged somewhat the worse for its unseemly incarceration.

This, however, was nothing to an experience I

once had at a country house in England, when, having entrusted my packing to the footman who was valeting me, I found that, in a meticulous desire to economise space, he had packed my sponge-bag inside my boots and my boots inside my top-hat.

However, to revert to the Indian installation. The young prince whom I was to install was the Nawab of B——r, and the ceremony took place with due *éclat* in the Durbar Hall of the palace. But the preliminary visits were exchanged in a second palace where I was accommodated, and in a house which was being temporarily occupied by the young ruler. The best state furniture had been moved to the Durbar Hall, and the room in which the Nawab received me was in consequence somewhat sparsely equipped. At the upper end stood the silver chairs of state, upon which my host and I took our seats. Below and lower down were ranged in two confronting rows the seats which were to be occupied by his staff and by mine, the former on the left, and the latter on the right. The procession had entered, the preliminary bows had been made, the Nawab and I had taken our seats. My staff, faultlessly clad in white duck uniforms, stood in a line in front of the chairs upon which they were now expected to sit down. Instead, however, of the customary upright seats, there had been substituted for them, in at least one case, a low English arm-chair upholstered in satin. The A.D.C. for whom this was intended, not realising, when the signal to sit down was given, that his intended seat was a good deal lower than that of his colleagues, made a descent upon it so

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precipitate that he landed upon the back of the chair instead of on the seat. Over went the chair backwards, and the only spectacle presented to us was the two little white-trousered legs of the Guardsman sticking up in the air, with his spurs protruding from his shining boots, and himself totally unable either to recover his equilibrium or regain his seat. Convulsions of laughter twisted the faces and shook the forms of his comrades. The Indian Sirdars opposite sat immovable, without the flicker of an eyelash, or the symptom of a smile ; while on the dais it was my lot, during the extrication of the A.D.C., to discourse learnedly to the prince on the advantages of the water-works which he was introducing into his capital city, and upon the services which his Camel Transport Corps were capable of rendering, in future imperial campaigns, to the British Raj.

## VIII

### THE ABDICATION

Fortuna saevo laeta negotio et  
ludum insolentem ludere pertinax  
transmutat incertos honores,  
nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.

Laudo manentem ; si celeres quatit  
pinnas, resigno quae dedit et mea  
virtute me involvo probamque  
pauperiem sine dote quaero.

HORACE, *Odes* iii. 29, 49.

THE relations between the Viceroy and the Ruling Princes of India, based partly on treaty, partly on long usage, partly on considerations of high expediency and honour, are among the most agreeable, but also the most anxious, of his responsibilities. In modern times the standards of administrative efficiency in the Native States have greatly improved, and many of them are ruled over by men who do honour to their exalted order. But in the last resort, in cases of flagrant misdemeanour or crime, the Viceroy retains, on behalf of the Paramount Power, the inalienable prerogative of deposition, though it is only with extreme reluctance and after the fullest inquiry and consultation with the Secretary of State that he would decide to exercise it.

A few such cases occurred in my time. One prince, who was a confirmed drunkard, shot his body-servant dead in a fit of ungovernable temper; another was privy to the poisoning of his uncle; a third, who for nearly twenty years had been guilty of gross maladministration, of shocking barbarity in the treatment of his subjects, and of persistent contumacy to the Government of India, only escaped a similar fate by himself expressing a voluntary desire to abdicate and live henceforward in retirement; although no sooner had this offer been made and accepted than he tried hard to withdraw it and to have the decision of the Government reversed.

This case revealed in so striking a fashion both the weaknesses and the inherent nobility of the Indian nature, that, now the incident is long buried in oblivion, and the principal actors are dead, I can safely tell the story here.

The prince in question had, I think, a streak of real madness in his composition, which perhaps accounted for his crimes. But he had also an extraordinary sense of humour, no small measure of self-respect, and in the last resort, a feeling of genuine loyalty to the British Crown. In his more violent moods he would heap abuse on the Government of India and its officers, and act as a lunatic towards his own people. Then he would write me a letter saying that he was only a naughty boy who ought to be whipped; although, when frustrated in any of his evil acts, he was more fond of describing himself as a "rat in a hole" and a "bison in a cage". After the acceptance of his abdication, he

begged to be allowed to see me—having previously expressed complete indifference to a projected official visit from the Viceroy—and I consented, feeling that if a ruling prince desired, before surrendering his authority, to make any communication to the representative of the Sovereign, he had a right to do so.

I shall never forget the interview. The Maharaja, a man of enormous size, weighing something like twenty-four stone, went down on his knees and touched my feet with his head. Streams of perspiration poured from his face and dropped in big beads from his chin and over his hands. With the utmost difficulty I induced him to resume his seat and to conduct himself with the dignity of a ruler and a prince. When he realised that the decision to accept his retirement was irrevocable, he became more composed, and bargained only for an ample allowance from the state revenues, for permission to reside in future at a country house within the borders of his own state, and for an invitation to attend the impending Delhi Durbar, as a faithful feudatory of the King-Emperor. There was no difficulty in arriving at a suitable arrangement on the first two points. As to the third, I acceded on two conditions—both of which the Prince accepted—viz. that he should comport himself with propriety and decorum while at Delhi, and that he should not announce his abdication (of which nothing was yet known) until after his return. It seemed to me better to trust to his sense of loyalty and self-respect in both matters, although in view of his



previous aberrations and explosions I felt that I was incurring some risk.

The Maharaja was true to his word. He appeared at Delhi, where he attended all the functions, said nothing to any one about his troubles, and enjoyed himself immensely. As I rode off the parade ground, after the great review, I caught sight of a gigantic and bejewelled figure, perched on the top of a charabanc, swaying to and fro, and cheering at the top of his voice. It was he.

After he had returned to his state, the moment for the public announcement of his abdication drew near. The Agent to the Governor-General was rather nervous as to how this would pass off, and consulted me as to the sort of speech that he should make on the occasion. On the other hand, the Maharaja asked my permission to make the announcement in his own language. Here, again, were serious possibilities of danger. But His Highness had already so fully justified my confidence at Delhi that I once more complied, and informed the prince that I trusted him to make the public declaration in a becoming way. It was not without some anxiety that I awaited a report of the speech. The Maharaja entered the Durbar Hall with his eldest son, a young boy. The nobles and officials of the state, the Agent to the Governor-General, and the British officers were present, and a considerable crowd.

The Maharaja first announced his own intended retirement, and then placed his son on the *gadi* which he had himself just vacated. Addressing

the assemblage he then requested the Government of India to continue to watch with paternal interest over the welfare of the young prince, so that he might prove himself to be an enlightened ruler, beloved by his subjects and worthy of the approval of the King-Emperor. Turning to the boy he then spoke to him as follows :

“ On this solemn occasion my earnest injunction to you is to be loyal to the British Government ; and if you have any representations to make to the Government, do so in a courteous and respectful manner. Remain always a staunch supporter of the Paramount Power. In your private and public life follow the marriage and other customs of your country, your religion, and your family, and by earnest attention to your education qualify yourself for the exercise of ruling powers as soon as you may be of age to receive them.”

Having delivered this admirable and dignified allocution, which was in fact a confession of his own failure, the Maharaja stalked down the Durbar Hall, without another word, entered his carriage outside, and drove away into private life.

There, on the banks of the holy Nerbudda, he speedily recovered his equanimity, and led a very tranquil and happy existence. He even used to invite me to spend a Saturday to Monday in his country retreat. Having an ample revenue, he developed a taste for travelling about India in a special train ; but when he reached his destination, his vein of eccentricity would assert itself, and he would decline to emerge from his railway carriage, staying

there for some days at a time, and eventually returning without having left it. When I was re-appointed Viceroy for a second term, he wrote to me to express the hope that "my beneficent sway over the teeming millions of his mother country might be continued with perfect health, peace, and prosperity".

So we remained friends till I left India; and not many years after, he himself died. The story is a curious one, in its revelation of a very complex and extraordinary character, in which the good and the evil were mixed in puzzling proportions. But it cannot be denied that nothing in his official life became the prince so well as his manner of leaving it, and that by the dignified character of his exit he went far to redeem the undisciplined errors of his earlier career.

## IX

### INSCRIPTIONS AND PETITIONS

To speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to speak in good words or in good order.—BACON, *Of Discourse*.

THE Indians excel in street decoration, illuminations, and every form of ceremonial observance. When the Viceroy or a Governor proceeds upon tour, still more of course if a member of the Royal House visits India, he passes through streets fantastically adorned, and under triumphal arches, built of the slenderest materials (very often little more than bamboo), but often decorated with the greatest ingenuity and taste. A feature of these arches is the inscriptions with which they are as a rule embellished, and the composition of which affords a much-valued scope for the talents of the local babu or university student, who may possess a smattering of European or even classical knowledge, and who is appealed to for a scholarly composition of words. I recall certain of these inscriptions under which I passed in the course of my official tours.

In some cases there would be a half-conscious reflection of the Prayer Book or the Scriptures. It is true that I was spared the particular welcome that was extended to an unusually ugly Governor, who,

on leaving the railway station, read in gigantic characters over the gateway the inscription :

Good Lord ! deliver us !

But at Malda I was welcomed by the words :

Blessed be our Lord ;

while at Burdwan the local scholar had even dipped into the Vulgate :

Welcome our Lord

Nisi Dominus frustra.

Elsewhere, an inscription in the vernacular must, I think, have been a quotation from one of the Indian Sacred Books, for it ran when translated :

Rejoice, O Heart, in the advent of Messiah-like being,  
representing a nobler one.

At Chittagong, my dress, which so far as I remember was ordinary mufti, received an ambiguous but wholly unmerited compliment :

He cometh as a bridegroom

Clad in the garment of love.

Sometimes the Sovereign would be acclaimed in the same breath as his representative. For instance, Murshedabad thus addressed me :

Vive l'Empereur and Viceroy.

Hail gracious Lord.

On the other hand, at Trichinopoli I drove under the following :

Welcome, our future Emperor.

Any alarm that I might have felt at being regarded as a pretender was, however, removed by the assur-

ance that this particular inscription had been prepared many years before for the Duke of Clarence when he visited Southern India, and that it was pulled out again from time to time, if ever the Viceroy appeared upon the scene. At Jeypore an accidental misspacing of the words converted

into  
A Gala Day

A Gal a Day,  
which sounded rather naughty.

But it was when, in deference to my assumed academic reputation, resort was had to the classics, that some of the best efforts were forthcoming. Thus at Azimgunj I was welcomed by :

Vive, Vale.

At Manipur there was a fine combination both of language and sentiment :

Bonjour ! Bon Soir !  
Vive l'Empereur,  
Fidus Achates.

This reminds me of a dinner I once gave in London to an Oriental potentate who knew a little French but no English, and who, as I parted with him at the door, exclaimed : " Bon Soir, Bien, Merci, Très fatigué ".

At Sivasamudram a more practical turn was given to the exhortation :

Gloria in excelsis  
Be ever healthy.

At Madura, where I was welcomed on one archway to  
The Athens of Southern India,

another said :

Adieu the successful Fighter of Famin.

But the salutation which struck the homeliest note and gave me perhaps the greatest pleasure was that of Karachi :

Hail Overworked Viceroy,  
Karachi wants more Curzons.

It is, however, in letters, appeals, and petitions, of which the Viceroy receives many scores weekly, that some of the greatest triumphs are achieved. My private secretaries used to paste the best of these into an album, which I still possess, and a few of the gems of which I will here extract. It must not be supposed, if I, or any one else, quote amusing specimens of what is commonly known as Babu English, that we do it with any idea of deriding the native intelligence, or of poking fun at its errors. On the contrary, one of the most remarkable experiences in India is the astonishing command of the English language—to them a foreign tongue—that is acquired by the better-educated Indians, enabling them not merely to write, but to speak it with an accuracy and a fluency at which I never ceased to wonder. The blunders and absurdities that find a frequent place in the Indian Press are cited both because they strike a note of gaiety in the rather dull routine of Indian official life, and, still more, because they often reveal a sense of humour on the part of the writers that is both quaint and refreshing. It is in this spirit only that I reproduce a number of extracts from my own collection.

The cause of education seemed to spur the inscription writers to their best efforts. The High School at Bikanir thus addressed me in language the sentiment of which was unimpeachable even if the expression was somewhat obscure :

Fulls wells the fountain of true fealty here  
To hail Your Excellencies' advent dear.

Live I so live I	Live I so live I
To my King faithfully.	To my Lord heartily.

On one of the walls at the High Schools at Dhar I read the rather enigmatic gloss on a familiar precept :

Spare the rod—spoil the child.  
No pains  
No cains.

Sometimes the universal Anglo-Indian custom of condensing composite official titles into initials (for instance "Agent to the Governor-General" became A.G.G.) operates as a snare, for on one occasion a very popular Political officer, on returning from leave to the state to which he was accredited, found the welcome extended to him on a triumphal arch expressed in the following abbreviated form :

Let us give a big W.C.  
To our popular A.G.G. !

I had one correspondent, who claimed to be the legitimate heir to the Native State of which his ancestors had been dispossessed, and to which he apparently expected to be restored. He always addressed me as "your afflicted and distressed", or as "your affectionate, humble, and beloved child". He would always inquire kindly after my own



family, who were quite juvenile, but whom he persisted in describing as my "venerable children". Perhaps the best among his many productions was one in which he explained his apparent failure to see me when I visited the town in which he resided.

I wrote to Mr. A—— to procure me interview with your Sublime Lordship. Although he is very aptitude, theological, polite, susceptible, and temporising, yet he did not fulfil the desire of the Royal blood. When your susceptible Lordship was at the Judge's Bungalow, I wrote again. What I heard of your superfine Lordship's conduct, the same I have seen from the balcony of my liberal Highness father. Your inimitable Lordship returned the complements of thousands of people that were standing on the street, but my fortune was such that I could not play before your sumptuous Lordship upon my invaluable lute, which will be very delicious to the ear to hear. . . . I hope that your transident lordship will keep your benevolent golden view on the forlorn royal blood to ennoble and preserve the dignity of His Highness father in sending the blessing letter of the golden hands.

This correspondent had indeed a richer vocabulary than any one I have ever come across, and the epithets with which he honoured me in a correspondence extending over nearly seven years would have surprised even the compilers of the new Oxford Dictionary. I find that in addition to the adjectives already quoted, he described me at one time or another as parental, compassionate, orpulent, predominant, surmountable, merciful, refulgent, alert, sapient, notorious, meritorious, transitory, intrepid, esteemable, prominent, discretional, magnanimous, mellifluous, temperate, abstemious, sagacious, free-

willed, intellectual, inimitable, commendable, all-accomplished, delicious-hearted, superfine, ameliorative, impartial, benevolent, complaisant, efficient, progressive, spiritual, prudent, philanthropic, equitable. I could have sworn that he composed with a dictionary at his elbow and dipped into it at random for his adjectives, were it not that several of these no dictionary in the world would be found to contain. He even pursued me to England after my retirement, and described himself as "anxiously awaiting like a peacock that is longing for drops of rain, to receive his kingdom from the so-called just and benign British Government".

The commonest circumstances in which the Indian petitioner would appeal to the Viceroy for help were, however, in respect of domestic trouble, or private debt, desire for employment, or failure to pass the University examinations.

A young Madrasi Brahmin, twenty-four years of age, had become engaged to a girl in Europe, whereupon his family turned him out, and he appealed to me. Writing in the third person, he thus described the attitude of his lady-love :

He has many things to be proud of, but of nothing is he more proud than the love cherished for him by his European bride. She is the only daughter of a gentleman, has two bungalows and some landed property. She loves him too much. She promises to give him some thousands and a living.

Finally, admitting, in spite of the lady's promises, that he was quite penniless, he humbly requests Your Excellency to Christianise him

and make him the agent of a Mission College for at least a year. After collecting 500 Rupees for his ship fare let him reach Europe. If he gets the sum just now, he is ready to go away to Europe at once. Poor creature, he is passing sleepless nights and shedding midnight tears on his sleepless pillow.

I am afraid I was unable to give him the narcotic that he desired.

One Hindu matron, I must confess, caused me a little embarrassment ; for having appealed to me for succour on every conceivable ground, her destitution, her suffering, her parents, her children, herself, she finally reached this climax :

We have been reduced to such a great poverty and high debt that even we are now spending most of our days by starving. My intention is to meet with you, for *you are the Father of my whole family*. Please write me sharp when, where, and on what date.

An even more poignant note was struck in the following native petition :

Respectfully sheweth—That your honour's servant is poor man in agricultural behaviour and much depends on season for staff of life, therefore he prays that you will favor upon him and take him into your saintly service that he may have some permanently labour for the support of his soul and his family ; wherefore he falls on his family's bended knees and implores to you of this merciful consideration to a damnable miserable like your honour's unfortunate petitioner. That your lordship's honour's servant was too much poorly during the last rains and was resuscitated by much medicines which made magnificent excavations in the coffers of your honourable servant whose means are circumscribed by his large family consisting of 5 female

women and 3 masculine, the last of which are still taking milk from mother's chest, and are damnably noisy through pulmonary catastrophe in their interior abdomen. That your honour's damnable servant was officiating in several capacities in past generations but has become too much old for espousing hard labour in this time of his bodily life, but was not drunk, nor thief, nor swindler, nor any of these kind, but was always pious and affectionate to his numerous family consisting of the aforesaid 5 female women and 3 males, the last of whom are still milking the parental mother. That your generous honour's lordship's servant was entreating magistrate for employment in Municipality to remove filth, etc., but was not granted petition. Therefore your generous lordship will give to me some easy work in the department or something of this sort. For which act of kindness, your noble lordship's poor servant, will as in duty bound, pray for your longevity and procreativity.

It will be observed that the usual plea was for immediate and profitable employment, failing which the direst results were prophesied. Thus another letter ran as follows :

I had a very hope from your Royal Majesty's Kingdom of my success. As millions and millions are being fed by your Royal Majesty and your Royal Majesty is worldly God on the surface of Earth can make a poor man rich in single stroke of pen. For God's sake pray order my being taken on in any Railway or in any other Dept. for which act of charity I shall ever pray to my Maker may your Royal Majesty bathe in milk and be fruitful in children. Failing all hopes will end my life.

Sometimes a more purely business tone prevailed. A letter which two brothers at Bombay sent out to their patrons on the death of their father, who had

been the head of the firm, came to Government House. It ran as follows :

We have the pleasure to inform you that our respected father departed this life on the 10th inst. His business will be conducted by his beloved sons whose names are given below. The opium market is quiet at Malwa 1500 rupees per chest. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? We remain, etc.

The " failed " students were, however, the most prolific class of correspondents. One such sought to disarm me by commencing with a quotation :

The greater man, the greater courtesy.—TENNYSON.

And hence I am writing to you, dearest and most revered Lord, with all the filial love and loyalty that Hindoo subject can bestow on their King. Cause of writing is some greatest grief and sorrow that I have met with. Being a student of the Central Hindoo College I have been most unjustly and cruelly treated and been failed in Physics in the Intermediate examination of the Allahabad University. I have passed in all other subjects, in aggregate too. I was so very well prepared that the thought of wasting one more year in the same class breaks my heart. My Physics paper too is more than sufficient to secure me pass-marks only if examined ordinarily like other boys of the Government Colleges. Putting aside all these matters we must be shown some favour at the Coronation of King Emperor Edward VII. this year. At least all those who have failed in one subject should be called successful. My spirits have, as Cowper says, sunk ten degrees below par. My eyelids are heavy with sorrow. Alas ! Can no body remedy. Why do I not find some one who can relieve me. Perhaps because the only remedy is success. I fear I may not take too much of your most valuable time. As a King I appeal to your majesty, as a father I seek for your sympathy.

Another unsuccessful candidate cherished the same bright idea of turning the Coronation of King Edward VII. to good account ; for he wrote to me with even more ingenuous candour :

In honour of the King-Emperor's Coronation Your Excellency might be pleased to declare all those the Candidates of the different Examinations held by the Indian Universities this time as "passed". In order, however, to keep up the appearance of an examination, *I beg to suggest that the standard of passing be reduced to such a level that nearly all the candidates may get through.*

Yet another student begged me to relieve him of the moral stigma of deliberate falsehood. An order had been issued that sixteen years should be the minimum age of entry for the Allahabad University entrance examination.

"In my inexperience," he wrote, "I do not understand large administrative questions. But this order threatens to be of immense evil to me. I am taught not to tell a lie. But to lose the chance of passing an examination because I shall want a few short months to complete the limit has become the cause of a severe trial to me, presenting a temptation to violate the truth. The mischief is certain. It will determine students oscillating like me towards dishonesty. I have passed months in vain mental struggle, and have not the strength to overcome the temptation. So as a last resource I approach Y.E. to withdraw the order with a hope that I may be spared the moral degradation and may live to bless the rule of the foremost representative of a great nation."

One "insignificant schoolmaster in Bengal", describing himself as "an abandoned and cursed child of alma mater, who in her infantile wrath had

refused to admit him into her favour", and "as having been left in the dark to rot on the same pay these twenty-one years", desired, "at this fag end of life to have the honour of being a Member of Your Lordship's personal establishment".

Sometimes an even more exacting request would be put forward. A young man who was employed in a Native Press, finding himself in grave financial straits, thus addressed me :

Evidently I am so tired of my miserable life that on oath I say I most egregiously wish my death. It may perhaps be my foolishness to take undue advantage of Your Most Excellent Majesty's popular philanthroposy, but it is easily to be apprehended that I (a wretch of course) and not in the least way at blame when the unfathomable ways of God and the most astonishing boundaries to which necessity runs are slightly touched.

The petitioner thereupon asked me, "just taking him as a son", to "rescue him on such critical moment by sending, if not more, at least Rs.7000".

Now and then a different vein would be explored. A correspondent who described himself as a student of Shakspeare, wrote to say that he admired my speeches :

A wandering sinner in search of Solomon the Righteous and Solon the Wise, best identified in Your Excellency, so far as he can fathom Y.E.'s speeches, when they reach him in these untrodden wilds of India, where he reads sermons on stones, books in the running brooks, and Good Gracious God ! in everything.

Another native correspondent, when I was having trouble with the Mahsud Waziris on the north-west

frontier, suggested to me a quite original method of dealing with those unruly tribesmen :

If the Waziris knew that he who represents our Queen was the giver of such help as artificial arms and legs to them, it would do more to calm the ruffled waters than any punishment is likely to do.

On the other hand, when I made inquiries about the status of a very persistent petitioner, I was informed that he was "addicted to wine and women ; he associates himself with loud company, and there is no vice which he is not capable of. *When drunk he spares nobody and even maligns his venerable grand-father-in-law.*"

Frequently my correspondents broke into verse. One who had apparently been unsuccessful in business, wrote :

Curzon, once I was a Marwar merry.  
Once my sons were mirthful men.  
Lord once I was a prosperous very  
Next to Jeypore in state's ten.

Another gave me a lucid description of pastoral life :

Then wakes up the husband healthy after a sound sleep.  
And bathing he howls to a believed God,  
Then he milks the mild cows and sheep  
And drenches the milk to children playing on sod.

While I was in India a native paper itself published the following specimen of forensic eloquence in the Mofussil, which was actually delivered by a Hindoo pleader at Barisal :

My learned friend with mere wind from a teapot thinks to browbeat me from my legs. But this is mere gorilla warfare. I stand under the shoes of my client, and only



seek to place my bone of contention clearly in your Honour's eye. My learned friend vainly runs amuck upon the sheet anchors of my case. Your Honour will be pleased enough to observe that my client is a widow, a poor chap with one postmortem son. A widow of this country, your Honour will be pleased to observe, is not like a widow of your Honour's country. A widow of this country is not able to eat more than one meal a day, or to wear clean clothes, or to look after a man. So my poor client had not such physic or mind as to be able to assault the lusty complainant. Yet she has (been) deprived of some of her more valuable leather, the leather of her nose. My learned friend has thrown only an argument *ad hominy* upon my teeth that my client's witnesses are only her own relations. But they are not near relations. Their relationship is only homœopathic. So the misty arguments of my learned friend will not hold water—at least they will not hold good water. Then my learned friend has said that there is on the side of his client a respectable witness, viz., a pleader, and since this witness is independent so he should be believed. But your Honour, with your Honour's vast experience, is pleased enough to observe that truthfulness is not so plentiful as blackberries in this country. And I am sorry to say, though this witness is a man, of my own feathers, that there are in my profession black sheep of every complexion, and some of them do not always speak gospel truth. Until the witness explains what has become of my client's nose leather he cannot be believed. He cannot be allowed to raise a castle in the air by beating upon a bush. So, trusting in that administration of British justice upon which the sun never sits, I close my case.

There were, of course, many cases in which the native exuberance of fancy and fondness for hyperbole in language found suitable vent, and one of the most pleasing of these was the address from the

little Himalayan Hill State of Bushahr, which expatiated with pardonable pride on its own beauties :

Let us first of all thank our Heavenly Father, Whose Grace has to-day enabled us to see Your Honour and Her Ladyship in the Country of Bushahr. O Lord, these beautiful mountains, covered with the lofty trees, clothed in the Aaron's beard, embraced by the lovely Virginia creepers, bearing the leaves and flowers of the bright green, yellow, pink, and crimson colours, yielding the nourishment to the eyes of the travellers passing by, these fine shrubs, nearly concealed under the air-creepers, bent down by the weight of the small pearl-like flowers of the sweetest fragrance, these huge stones that have gathered abundant velvety moss, situated naturally and beautifully here and there along the valley, these silvery streams and the picturesque waterfalls, that purely flow down to and fro all around the Sutlej Valley, and these invisible Nymphs of the forests, as well as of the eternal snow, do welcome to your Honour and Her Ladyship, by the sweet voice of the warblings of the pretty little birds and hummings of the black bees. O my Lord, the songs of Your Honour's spotless glory, of the impartiality, the love of honesty, the sincerity, and the benevolence to the poor people (which are the real ornaments of the human beings) are cheerfully sung by the celestial maids in heaven.

Finally, I will conclude with the following veracious summary of the Life of Henry VIII., which was written by the Babu student at about the same time :

Henry the Eighth was a good looking man, he had a red beard, he was very well proportioned, but he had a hot temper. He was very religious and he pulled down a great deal of churches and monasteries, he built Colleges with them and schools with them too, the school he called the Blue Coat School, and a College called Oxford College.

He turned the monks out who were rich once but had to go into the workhouse afterwards, he married Katherine of Arrogant for twenty years. He got to know Anne Beloyne; she waited on Katherine that is how he got to know her. Anne became a Queen and Katherine was sent away. She became religious and became a monk.

Henry got to hear things about Anne, and she had her head cut off—though the things were not true, for she had but a little neck. Henry was left a widow, but he soon got married again—this time it was to Jane Seymour.

He liked Jane Seymour, she had a son a few days after she died. So Henry was a widow again, and he married another Anne; this time Anne Cleves this Anne he did not like, for she was floundering mare, and not Pretty so he sent her away again and gave her some gold to live upon without him, while he got married to another Katherine Howard. She was not a very good wife, and Henry got to hear things again as he did before—so she had her head cut off, and he married Katherine Parr who looked after his bad legs.

## X

### THE VALET

The very pink of perfection.—GOLDSMITH, *She Stoops to Conquer*, Act I.

Quid domini faciant, audent quum talia fures ?

VIRGIL, *Ecl.* iii. 16.

No man, according to the popular saying, is a hero to his valet. But there may be occasions when the inverse proposition is true, that a valet may be a hero to his master. One such English body-servant did I possess in India, whose performances, spontaneous and unprovoked, were a source to me of incessant surprise, mingled with the most profound admiration. Possessed of a fine appearance, an engaging manner, and unlimited effrontery, beautifully clad and equipped for any emergency, there was no situation with which he was not prepared to cope, and few from which he did not emerge in triumph. He was a little uncertain about his aspirates. But this added to, rather than detracted from, the novelty of his remarks upon men and things in general.

When I went on a visit to the Native States of Cochin and Travancore in Southern India in 1900, arriving at the former by sea, our vessel dropped

anchor in the early morning at some distance from the shore. Along this the crested surf could be seen and heard booming in lines of foam, while enormous crowds lined the beach. When I went on deck I saw, dancing on the waves alongside, a boat of wonderful construction with a figurehead in imitation of a gigantic bird, somewhat like the swan-boat in Lohengrin, and with two state chairs erected on a platform on its back, under a painted and gilded canopy. I was informed that Lady Curzon and I were expected to go ashore on this fairy barge, propelled by the state rowers who were awaiting our descent from the ship. On the other hand, the Resident, with an eye on the surf, strongly dissuaded this form of disembarkation, which he said might precipitate us at a critical moment into the sea. So we decided to wait a little and then land in one of the more ordinary craft that were hovering around.

A little later, happening to look shorewards, I saw the swan-boat, careering gaily towards the beach. On the two state chairs, smiling and self-possessed, sat my valet and the lady's maid, whom he had inveigled into the conspiracy, both exquisitely turned out; and from the shore we heard the loud huzzas that greeted their landing—I am sorry to say without the ducking that ought to have been their lot.

A second and somewhat similar incident occurred when I paid an official visit, with the escort of the East India Squadron, to the Persian Gulf in November 1903. Among the ports at which we called

was the little town of Lingah on the Persian shore of the Gulf. Etiquette prescribed that my military secretary should go ashore to return the visit of the local Governor. Accordingly in the course of the afternoon he went off in the boat attended by several of the staff. Upon landing they were conducted through a street to the house in which the Governor resided, and where the official exchange of courtesies was to take place. This building had an open gallery or reception-room looking over a balcony on to the street. As the military secretary approached, hearing voices overhead, he looked up, and there, in the upper chamber, he saw the valet, comfortably seated in the place of honour, smoking a cigarette and drinking coffee amicably with the Governor, who doubtless thought that the particular angel whom he was entertaining unawares was the military secretary, possibly even the Viceroy himself.

But the valet's greatest achievements were reserved for the field of sport, in which his easy manner and unabashed assurance enabled him to reap many spoils. Perhaps his most conspicuous performance was the following. I was visiting the Native State of R——, famous for the excellence of its tiger-shooting, and the hospitality of its chief. The Vice-regal train pulled up at the platform of the station at an early hour in the morning. On these occasions there is usually some little delay in getting everything into order, before the Viceroy is allowed to make his appearance. The prince and his nobles and courtiers have to take up their proper positions ; the Guard of Honour must be marshalled ; the

band must be ready to play; the Viceroy's staff descend and exchange greetings with their host, while the Viceroy from the slats of his carriage window looks out and sees the preparations being made outside.

On this occasion the Maharaja, with his immense turban and dress of pure white, was to be seen moving up and down as the train steamed in. The first to descend from the railway carriage was the valet. His debonair mien and immaculate appearance at once attracted the attention of the prince, who, conceiving him to be some important official of the Viceregal household, probably the military secretary himself, entered into confidential conversation with him. Then it was that, from the innocent retreat of my compartment, I overheard the following colloquy :

M.R. And how is His Excellency ?

V. I am glad to say that 'is Hexcellency is hexceedingly well.

M.R. I hope to give His Excellency a good shoot.

V. 'Ow many tigers, M'raja, have you got for 'is Hexcellency ?

M.R. We have marked down no fewer than sixteen.

V. *(with an accurate recollection of the previous failure of similar forecasts, was seen to poke the Maharaja in the ribs, and with a knowing wink replied)* 'Alve it once, M'raja, and 'alve it again, and you'll be nearer the mark !

And the curious thing was that the valet, with his superior acumen, was absolutely right ; for the result of the shoot was that we killed four tigers, and no more.

## XI

### THE PLAGUE HOSPITAL

Which I wish to remark,  
And my language is plain—  
That for ways that are dark  
And for tricks that are vain,  
The heathen Chinese's *not* peculiar—  
Which the same I would rise to explain.  
BRET HARTE (slightly adapted).

IN the Middle Ages and down to relatively modern times the Plague in one form or another was a familiar and almost a chronic feature in Europe as well as in the East, from which as a rule it came. In recent times it has reappeared with less frequency, and with less devastating consequences. But its most appalling recrudescence occurred during my time in India, when for years it lay like a blight upon the land and was responsible for a mortality that was said to have amounted to over seven and a half millions of people. Brought by rats in the holds of ships from Hongkong in 1896, and transmitted, as subsequent scientific investigation showed, by the rat-flea from rat to rat, and from rats to human beings, it laid hold of the population of great cities whom it swept off with fearful rapidity; it attacked the villages; it cut a swathe as of a mighty



death-dealing scythe through the entire country, sparing some districts by a mysterious caprice, but ravaging others. The British authorities began with measures of compulsory inspection, evacuation, disinfection, quarantine, and the like, but were obliged to desist from these by the overpowering ignorance and invincible antagonism of the native population. Literally they would sooner die than be saved against their will. Violent riots occurred, policemen were murdered, even native medical officers were burned alive. Gradually but wisely the Government relaxed the methods employed; persuasion, conciliation, voluntary effort, co-operation, optional inoculation were the agencies that brought the best results. The great thing was to remove the patient at once (for the operation of the disease was extraordinarily rapid) from the infected house or quarter to the nearest plague-camp or hospital, and there to surround him with the conditions—pure air, sound treatment, and stimulating sustenance—that gave the best chance of recovery. Even so 75-80 per cent of those who were stricken died.

In the autumn of 1899, when the visitation was at its height, I went on tour to many of the worst afflicted areas, and was inoculated in advance with the prophylactic serum, which saved so many thousands of lives, and would have saved so many more had not an unfortunate accident, resulting in a number of deaths in a native village from the contamination of a single bottle of fluid there employed, paralysed the scheme, almost in its infancy. The preparations made everywhere by the medical staff

were admirable. Plague camps were hurriedly improvised to which the patients were taken from their huts ; splendid hospitals were opened. A devoted staff of workers, European and Native, male and female, dedicated themselves to the service of the people. But the conservatism of the latter, their prejudices, their fatalism, were obstacles which the patience not of days or weeks but of months and even years, was required to overcome.

When the Viceroy goes on tour everything is hurriedly prepared for his inspection, hundreds of pounds are spent on projects for which a few rupees could not previously be found, buckets of whitewash are available for the asking, the whole place is swept and garnished, not, as in the Scripture narrative, for the unclean spirits to enter in, but on the opposite assumption that they have been successfully and finally driven out. I used to apply a very critical eye to these spick-and-span demonstrations, of the extemporised and artificial character of which I was more than once made rudely aware.

The most startling revelation occurred at Nagpur. A sharp outbreak of the bubonic plague had attacked that neighbourhood, and people were dying like flies in the surrounding villages. Outside the town a spacious temporary structure had been hastily run up with bamboos and matting, and had been arranged as a hospital for the accommodation of the patients. At an early hour in the morning I was driven out to visit this place. It was a pattern of neatness ; the beds stretched in long rows down the sides of a central avenue, and above each bed

was the chart of the temperature of the occupant. The doctors, European and Native, buzzed around; all the requisite medical appurtenances were there in abundance. Underneath a rough blanket the wretched victims lay, each on his mattress, with a look as of death in their eyes. The morning air percolated with a refreshing coolness through the interstices of the matting.

I visited the patients, who seemed to me surprisingly few, in turn and asked them whence they came, and when they had arrived. Being a little startled at the coincidence by which they all seemed to have come in at 5 or 6 A.M. on that very morning, I drew a bow at a venture, and said to one man, "What did they give you to come?" "One rupee" was his unhesitating reply. The same question to the next invalid elicited a similar reply—there being a slight variation in the figure of the bribe—and so on with the remainder. The whole affair was, I will not say a hoax, because the patients and the plague were both there, but a put-up arrangement for the special edification of the Viceroy. My thoughts were "too deep for tears"; and, as the same poet says in another place, I also had "two voices"—one for the innocent victims of the stratagem who had been paid to come in, but who after all may, in the long run, have profited by the experience; the other for the professional authors of the stratagem; and of these two voices, the latter, if my recollection serves me rightly, was the mightier.

## XII

### THE "KOWTOW"

At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down.—Judges v. 27.

He struck nine times the ground with his forehead to adore in prayer or thanksgiving the mercy of the Great Khan.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, cap. lxiv.

WHEN I was in Peking in 1892, and afterwards when I wrote my book, *Problems of the Far East*, I made a special study of the history of the *kowtow*, that form of obeisance that had figured so largely in the diplomatic struggle between Europe and China for two centuries, and the final abandonment of which signified the latter's defeat. The performer of the *kowtow* kneels thrice on the ground, and on each occasion knocks his forehead three times on the floor, in sign of subjection to the Sovereign. From one point of view it may be said to mark the extremity of deference, from another the maximum of humiliation. This obeisance has figured from time immemorial as the Court ceremonial of Eastern kings; 2300 years ago the liberty-loving Athenians condemned their envoy Timagoras to death because he had *kowtowed* at Susa to Artaxerxes Mnemon, the great king. But

the particular form of prostration which consists of nine blows of the forehead on the ground was consecrated by long usage to the Court of the Son of Heaven. As early as A.D. 713 an Arab Embassy from Kutaiba to the Emperor Hwen Tsang declined to perform the *kowtow* and were sentenced to death by the indignant Chinese. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuit Fathers *kowtowed* without any compunction—so did the earlier European envoys to China from Holland, Russia, and Portugal. The Chinese always maintained that the first English Plenipotentiary to be admitted to an audience with the Chinese Emperor, viz. Lord Macartney, in 1793, had *kowtowed* to Kien Lung; but he declared that though he had offered to do so, if a Chinese official of equal rank would do the same to a picture of George III., with which he had provided himself, he had ended by only kneeling on one knee.

The next British Envoy, Lord Amherst, in 1816 escaped the *kowtow* because, owing to a violent dispute upon his arrival in Peking, he never saw the Emperor at all. It was in the China War of 1860 that the incident occurred which Sir Francis Doyle made the subject of his little poem—already a classic—entitled “The Private of the Buffs”. A note prefixed to the poem explained that, some Sikhs and an English private soldier having fallen into the hands of the Chinese and been commanded to perform the *kowtow*, while the Sikhs obeyed, the English soldier declared that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, whereupon

he was immediately knocked upon the head and killed :

Yes, honour calls !—with strength like steel  
He put the vision by,  
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel ;  
An English lad must die.  
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,  
With knee to man unbent,  
Unflinching on its dreadful brink,  
To his red grave he went.<sup>1</sup>

The war was sufficient. It rang the death-knell of the *kowtow*. After the war of 1860 the *kowtow*, without being expressly mentioned in the Treaty that followed, was abolished by it for foreign representatives ; and from the first ensuing audience in June 1873 to the present date it has never been either demanded or performed.

I little thought that I should ever see, much less receive, the *kowtow* myself. But in December 1901 I paid a visit to the Northern Shan States in the extreme north-easterly corner of Burma, where it touches the Chinese frontier ; and there, at Lashio, I held a Durbar to receive the Sawbwas and Myozas of those distant principalities, which are not among the least loyal of the minor feudatories of the British Crown.

The ceremony was held in a thatched *pandal* or open hall, erected for the occasion and gaily adorned with bunting and gold umbrellas. I was taken to it

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth while to rescue from oblivion the name of this brave man. It was not Moyse, as reported by Sir F. Doyle, but John Moyes, a native of the kingdom of Fife.

mounted on a white pony and shaded by eight white umbrellas of state—described to me as the regulation number for the representative of a Sovereign. It was a very picturesque scene as the chiefs in their native finery came forward, one after the other, and offered their homage.

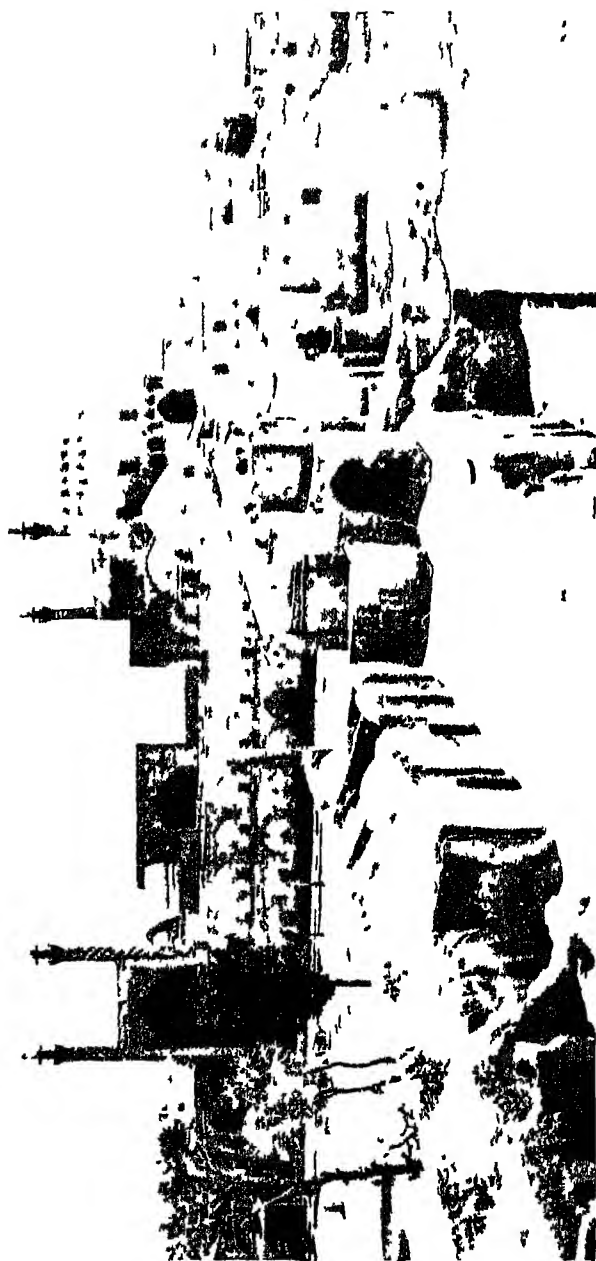
Some years before, when Under-Secretary to Lord Salisbury in the Foreign Office in London, I had had something to do with this remote region; and I recalled the desire of a Chinese chief of a small border state, called Kokang, to be allowed to come under British jurisdiction rather than be left on the Chinese side of the boundary, which we were engaged in demarcating at that time. After the Shan chiefs had been presented, I noted in the assembly at Lashio the tall and erect figure of an elderly Chinaman dressed in the dark-blue silk robe of a mandarin, with the embroidered dragon plastron on his breast and the Chinese red-tasselled skull-cap upon his head. Below the coat he wore loose trousers of a brighter hue and long, embroidered felt-soled boots. He came forward in his turn, advanced on the carpet in front of the dais on which I was seated, bowed three times, lifting his hands high to his forehead, and dropping them again; and then and there, of his own accord, without warning, solemnly and with infinite dignity, knelt down, and three times struck his forehead on the ground. Then he rose, amid a breathless silence, repeated the salute, knelt again, and three times renewed the same obeisance. A third time he repeated the rising and the prostration, and then with imperturbable gravity rose and backed slowly

down the stairs of the platform. It was my old friend of Foreign Office days, the Heng or Chief of Kokang; and the performance was all the more remarkable in that he was nearly blind, having all but lost his eyesight some time before, while making gunpowder.





## THE CRADLE OF POLO



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CITY AND THE IMPERIAL MOSQUE OF NPAHAN

## THE CRADLE OF POLO

Soon as the Lord of Heaven had sprung his horse  
Over horizon into the blue field,  
Saláman kindled with the wine of sleep  
Mounted a barb of fire for the Maidán ;  
He and a troop of Princes—Kings in blood,  
Kings in the kingdom-troubling tribe of beauty,  
All young in years and courage, bat in hand,  
Galloped afield, tossed down the golden ball  
And chased, so many crescent Moons a full ;  
And, all alike intent upon the Game,  
Salámán still would carry from them all  
The prize, and shouting " Hal ! " drive home the ball.

(From the *Salámán and Absal of Jamia* ; translated by E. FitzGerald.)

Let other people play at other things :  
The king of games is still the game of Kings.

J. K. STEPHEN.

EVERY one knows that the game of polo had its origin in remote times, centuries before the Christian era, in the sport-loving East. Under the name of *changan* (which was really the name of the stick) it was played at the Court and in the capitals of successive dynasties of Persian kings ; and to this day the Great Square or Piazza of Ispahan contains the stone pillars, 9 feet high and 24 feet apart, which marked the goals, and the open stand from which the game was watched by the Court. From Persia the game spread westwards to Constantinople and eastwards as far as China ; commencing everywhere

by being the favourite pastime of princes and nobles, but developing whenever the ponies and the means were forthcoming, into the popular recreation of the people.

It was played by the monarchs who fought the Crusaders, but not apparently by the Crusaders themselves, who amid the hundred things, good and bad, which they brought back from the Orient, appear strangely to have altogether omitted polo. Tamerlane is said to have encouraged his courtiers to play the game with the heads of their slaughtered enemies—a form of the sport which cannot have been provocative of either swift or scientific play. The great Akbar was so fond of it that he could not desist at sundown, but must play with luminous balls at night. More than one prince was killed on the polo ground. The game was illustrated by the Court painters and extolled in the verses of the most famous bards.

Then, somehow or other, polo vanished altogether from sight, and in the fall of dynasties, or amid the tumult and confusion that marked the eighteenth century in Asia, it ceased to be played, and remained a tradition in local chronicles or in the pages of poets and historians.

Suddenly, in the middle of the last century, it was discovered simultaneously, and by an absolutely fortuitous coincidence, to have survived in the two extreme corners of the Indian peninsula; hidden away, on the one side in the mighty mountains of the Hindu Kush that separate British India from the Central Asian *massif*, and at the other end, in the tangle of the hills that divide the watersheds of

Burma and Assam. Reports came from the north-west that the game was still played in the little principalities or communities of Dardistan, Baltistan, and Ladakh ; from the north-east, that it had been rediscovered in the tiny highland state of Manipur. How exactly it got to those places and was preserved there—like some unknown or forgotten animal type in a mid-African forest—no one seemed precisely to know. Doubtless it was a legacy to the Hindu Kush communities from the Central Asian Court of the descendants of the Moghuls. To Manipur it must have come from China.

There seems to be some dispute as to the exact dates at which the discovery was first made, and as to the individual pioneers who “brought the good news from Ghent”, and introduced the game that was destined ere long to become the favourite sport of the Englishman in India. But there can be no doubt that the precedence belongs to Manipur. Somewhere about 1854 or a little later, English planters in Cachar (Assam) learned the game from Manipuri settlers and exiles who had carried it thither from their own valley : a European polo club was formed at Silchar in 1859 ; in 1862 it was brought down to Calcutta, and from there enthusiastic officers took it up-country to the principal cantonments of Northern India as far as Peshawur.

Almost simultaneously, or possibly a little later, young British officers on leave in Kashmir saw the game played by some troops of the Maharaja at Srinagar, and became its sponsors on returning to their stations in the Punjab ; although whether its

first introduction there was due to their initiative, or to the Manipuri wave which by this time had flowed in a north-westerly direction as far as Lahore, is not quite certain. Anyhow, just as Grotefend and Rawlinson succeeded, by quite independent labours, in deciphering the cuneiform script in the first half of the nineteenth century, so, early in the second half, the immortal game burst upon India and the world like two almost simultaneous thunder-claps from the clear sky of the border ranges, whence no one had expected any particular good ever to come.

I imagine that there are but few persons who have been enabled by the accident of service or of travel, to see and to compare the native game as it is still played, or was played only a few years ago, in both those remote localities. As I happen to be one of that number, it may be worth while to set down the exact features of the two varieties of the game, as practised in Manipur and in the Hindu Kush states, so that polo lovers in England may realise how much or how little of the two Indian prototypes has survived in the process of immigration to Europe; and in what manner the game is pursued—unless it has since been anglicised out of all recognition—by the wild tribesmen of the Indian border.

I first saw it played in the course of my visit to the Pamirs in 1894. On my way northward from Srinagar, I came across the polo grounds of Astor, Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, Mastuj, Reshun, and Chitral; there is also a ground at Yasin. Farther to the east, in Baltistan, there are polo grounds at Shigar, Rondu, and Shardu. Yet more to the east, the game is



REISHUN POLO GROUND





played in Ladakh, and the principal arena used to be the main street of Leh.

There are slight differences in these various forms of the game, but the similarity is sufficiently great to admit of their being classified as a single genus.

It is from this quarter that the name, as we know it, takes its rise : for polo or *pulu* is the Tibetan word for the willow root, of which the ball is commonly made. The polo grounds vary greatly in size and shape, according to the space available. The Astor ground was 150 yards long by 20 yards wide. Other grounds were from 200 to 250 yards in length—I measured one as 280 yards—and from 30 to 40 in width. In my chapter on “The Mehtar of Chitral” will be found a rough plan of the polo ground there, which was of very unusual shape. The ground is sometimes of grass but quite as often of *put* or sandy earth, beaten to a hard consistency by galloping hoofs, and is usually surrounded by a low wall of rough stones, upon which the spectators take their seats, and from which the ball rebounds into play. The goals are low white stones fixed in the ground. At Hunza they were only about seven feet apart, but elsewhere I found the distance between them to be from twenty to thirty feet. The game is commonly played to the music of a band, who are seated on the wall above the middle of the ground. Their instruments were, as a rule, a big drum, a couple of kettledrums, and two or three clarionets with a note very much like a bagpipe. These instruments discoursed a steady but somewhat discordant music, which rose into a frantic din when a goal was scored.

The performers were drawn from a special and very low caste, called *Dom*, who were also the leather-workers of the community.

There appeared to be no limit to the number of players who might take part, but the number ordinarily ranged from four to twelve or more a side. The ponies which they bestrode were country bred, and as a rule came from Badakshan on the one side and Baltistan on the other, being from twelve to thirteen hands in height, sometimes rather less, exceedingly strong, wiry, and active. The players rode them with a plain snaffle and a single rein, frequently of rope; the saddles were of rather a primitive description, being sometimes little more than a rough pile or pad of thick cloth, though the better-equipped players used a saddle with a very high pommel and heavy crupper. None of them wore spurs, but they wielded a short whip suspended from the wrist. Owing, no doubt, to the small size of the ponies, a much shorter polo stick was employed than is common in England, the length being little more than three feet. The handle was of almond wood or wild cherry or bamboo, and sometimes of hazel or ash, and was fitted into a heavy plane or willow-wood head, which was apt to be curved in shape. The ball was of willow wood and very heavy, until the British officers, who habitually joined in the native game, introduced the lighter English ball of bamboo root. As far as I could ascertain there were no particular rules until the British players appeared on the scene: the hooking of sticks was freely indulged in; no scruple was entertained

about "off-side" and "crossing"; and the most glorious scuffles with indiscriminate banging and whacking took place, in which players and ponies were equally belaboured, but which neither appeared in the least to mind. The men rode with the utmost impetuosity and without a symptom of fear, and performed feats of horsemanship which, considering their primitive mounts, were truly astounding. They would charge at full speed right against the rough stone wall, being often as nearly as possible precipitated from their steeds with the violence of the impact.

By far the prettiest sight, however, excelling in speed and grace anything seen on an English polo ground, was the fashion in which the game was opened, or resumed after a goal had been scored. Instead of the ball being thrown by an umpire into the middle of the ground, the opener of the game (or the winner of the last goal) started off at a full gallop from one corner of the ground, with the whole of the rest of the field behind him, shouting as they raced. In his hand he held the ball, and, when he came to the centre of the field, he threw it into the air and struck it a mighty blow with his polo stick as it fell, the ball describing a parabola in the air before it finally touched the ground, when not infrequently—such was the skill of the best players and the force of the stroke—it sped between the opposing goal-posts and scored a goal. There was a well-known Nagar player at the time of my visit, who might usually be counted on for a goal in this fashion. The knack was sometimes, but rarely, acquired by the English players. I never saw one accomplish the feat.

Already, however, in 1894, the picturesque practice which I have described was falling into desuetude ; for, as pointed out by the British officers, it gave little or no opportunity to the defending side to save their goal. Accordingly at Baltit, the capital of Hunza, the victorious captain (usually the Raja), better mounted and more richly clad than the remainder, only galloped down one-quarter of the distance before striking off, while his adversaries, awaiting him in the centre, had a chance of intercepting the ball.

There was another respect in which the local practice had already undergone a notable modification. In the native game, a goal was not scored until one of the victorious side had dismounted from his pony and picked up the ball, the result being a fearful *mêlée*, very much like a " scrum " or " bully " at football, in which, however, horses were mingled with human beings in the struggle, often at considerable risk to both. This rule had already been abandoned, and the goal was counted as soon as the ball had passed between the posts.

Of course, our European game is more orthodox : the ground is more even, the riders are better mounted, the rules more precise, the strokes more scientific, and the play more brilliant. But I shall never forget the spectacle of that galloping crowd of shouting men : the brightly clad Raja thundering in front ; the swing of his upright polo stick ; the crack as the head of the mallet unfailingly hit the falling ball ; and the whiz of the latter as it flew through the air towards the enemy goal.

At Chitral, and I dare say elsewhere, the beaten side had to dance to the victors; and it was the particular pleasure of the Mehtar (afterwards, as is elsewhere related, unhappily murdered) to select as captain of the opposite team to himself, which was invariably beaten, an old gentleman who had previously made an unsuccessful attempt upon his life, and upon whom it amused him to wreak this playful revenge. The dancing that I saw at Hunza and elsewhere was not exactly what we should describe by that name in England. The dancers conducted a sort of running monologue with the members of the band, who gesticulated in reply, and followed their movements with encouraging shouts and yells. The dancing was not confined to the young; and I remember one performer, a grave and elderly individual in top-boots, with a floating brown *choga* or dressing-gown, who hopped about, and postured, and spun round amid the rapt admiration of the crowd. There was also a sort of sword-dance, performed by a man from Nagar with two swords.

Seven years later I saw the game played at Manipur, when I rode overland from Assam to Burma—the only Viceroy to visit that little state which ten years earlier had been the scene of one of the most frightful and inexplicable tragedies in Anglo-Indian history.

Polo in Manipur presented many similarities to the Hindu Kush game, but some remarkable contrasts. The capital being situated on a level plain in the middle of a broad valley, there was scope for a level ground of much larger dimensions than in the

mountains of the mighty Hindu Kush. Accordingly, the Manipur ground was 225 yards long by 110 broad, and was covered with very fair turf. But its most striking feature was that it had no goal-posts, the ground being surrounded by a low bank about two feet high, the striking of the ball across which at either end was the Manipuri equivalent of a goal. On the western side was a stand reserved for members of the Raja's family, most of whom were good players, being well mounted and having been trained to the game from childhood. The number of players was indeterminate, the correct number being from seven to nine a side, though there was no limit. The game that I saw was one of ten a side, and it was preceded and followed by a ceremonial which undesignedly illustrated the Chinese origin of the local game and the earliest Chinese connections of the state. Before the play began, the ten players lined up in front of me, as representative of the King-Emperor in India, and prostrated themselves at full length on the ground, twice striking the soil with their foreheads; the same homage was repeated at the close of the encounter.

Unlike the practice of the Hindu Kush border, the ball was thrown into the midst of the players when the terminal lines had been crossed, or when the ball went out; but it was not rolled along the ground when thrown in, but tossed in the air, the players being at liberty to strike it before it reached the earth.

The ponies were, I thought, smaller than those which I had seen at the other end of the Indian

frontier, varying from ten or eleven to twelve hands in height, but they were caparisoned in quite a peculiar manner. Big round balls of soft white cotton were suspended from their heads and backs to protect them from the blows of the polo sticks; while the legs of the players were similarly defended by a shield or flap of hard leather in front of the stirrups. In the latter, which were broad and heavy, the rider placed neither the ball nor the arch of his sole, but his naked toes. On his legs were worsted gaiters or leggings, reaching from the ankle to the knee. Round the loins he wore the native *dhoti* of white cotton or silk, the upper part of the body being clothed in a short jacket, or left bare. The players either coiled their long black hair in a knot behind the head or allowed it to stream over their shoulders. They bestrode very heavy and clumsy saddles with high projecting pommel and cantle. What with the rattling of the leather flaps and the flying hither and thither of the cotton balls, and the cries of the players, the scene was one of uncommon excitement and commotion. In the days before the catastrophe to which I have referred, Sunday evening was the favourite time of play, and then the *serapati* in his coloured jacket and silk drawers was the hero of the scene. When the princes played, a stake was offered in the shape of muslin cloths or turbans, hung up at the end of the ground, and these became the prize of the winning side, the losers having to pay the cost.

The implements of the game were less heavy than those which I have before described—perhaps owing



to British influence : the ball being of bamboo root, large and light ; the head of the polo club was of heavy wood, but the handle was commonly of well-seasoned cane, the upper end being covered with red or blue cloth. There were no *chukkers*, as in our game, the players being at liberty to change their ponies whenever they pleased ; and there was the same delightful absence of rules on which I have already commented.

I do not in the least agree with those who have said either of the Hindu Kush or the Manipur polo, or of both, that the game was a dribbling game, played at an easy canter, without any hard hitting ; slow to take part in, and slower to watch. On the contrary it seemed to me, in both localities, to consist mainly of hard galloping and tremendously hard hitting. I saw in both places difficult or fancy strokes which it would baffle any Englishman or American to attempt ; there was one Manipuri stroke in which the player caught the ball in the air, tossed it up, and throwing his reins on the pony's neck, hit the ball with the stick held in both hands.

I do not pretend to compare either of these rather primitive types of the game with the highly finished variety that may be seen at Hurlingham or Meadowbank—any more than one would compare village cricket with a Test Match at Lord's, or rounders with baseball. But the higher types would never have been produced or evolved had it not been for these hardy mountaineers preserving the tradition and maintaining the glorious spirit of the game throughout the centuries.

## THE MEHTAR OF CHITRAL



CHITRAL

## THE MEHTAR OF CHITRAL

The deep damnation of his taking-off.

SHAKSPEARE, *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 7.

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;

It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,

A brother's murder.

SHAKSPEARE, *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 3.

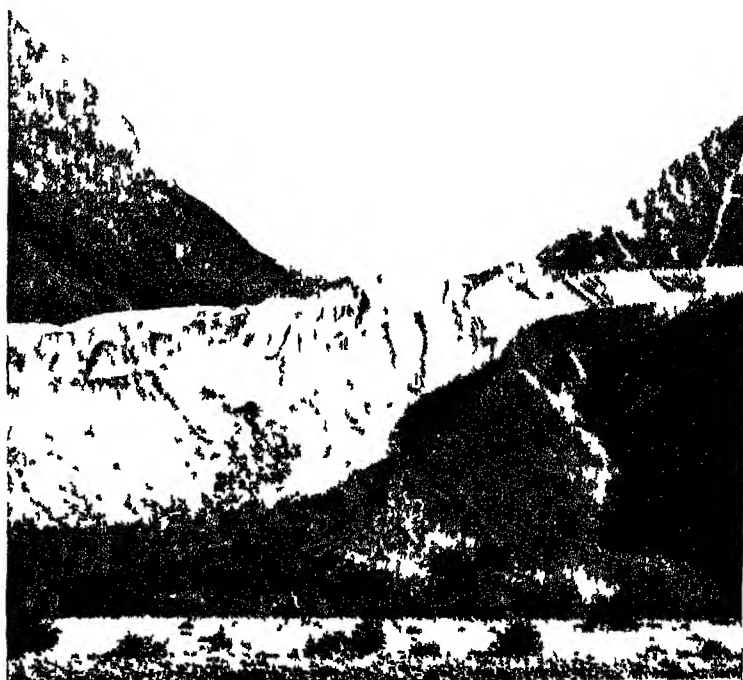
IN a later passage in this book I mention how it came about that in the autumn of 1894, after visiting the Pamirs and determining the true source of the Oxus, I crossed the main range of the Hindu Kush by the Baroghil Pass (12,460 feet) and followed the main course of the Yarkhun River in the company of Captain (now Sir Francis) Young-husband to Chitral. I was anxious to visit that little border state, because I realised its great importance, owing to its geographical position, in the scheme of frontier defence of the Indian Empire, and was convinced of the necessity of closing this small chink in the mountain palisade, which at that time Russia showed such a persistent desire to penetrate at whatever point she could find an entrance.

In this chapter I propose to relate the incidents of my journey, to describe the features and inhabitants of that remote and little-known country,

and to tell how my host, the ill-starred Mehtar of Chitral, came by his doom.

Colonel Woodthorpe, Captain (afterwards Sir Edmund) Barrow, Captain Younghusband, and Lieut. Cockerill were the only Englishmen who had previously descended by this route ; but my journey, made at the beginning of October, proved, as the Mehtar of Chitral afterwards told me, that though very difficult in summer, while the river is in flood and the glaciers require to be crossed, it is available from the early autumn till the late spring, when the water is sufficiently reduced to admit of the valley track being followed in or near the river-bed. Still it is not the most comfortable of experiences to be compelled, as I was on my first march, to ford a broad and rushing mountain torrent, whose force and volume nearly lift a pony from its legs, as many as twelve times in the day. In the same march I passed six glaciers, descending in snow-white cascades to the river's brink. As the evening sun shone from the glittering snow peaks behind them on to their splintered crests, and then stained crimson the jungle in the valley bottom, already reddening to the fall, I thought that I had rarely seen anything more sublime. Above Mastuj the river-bed straggled out into a respectable width, and contained a good deal of such low timber—willow, poplar, juniper, and birch. Below Mastuj it contracted and frequently assumed the conformation of a narrow and re-echoing gorge. The villages were occasional bunches of green, perched high above the torrent, upon the alluvial fan-shaped deposits that had been swept





MT. KOI AND ONE OF ITS GLACIERS YARKHUN VALLEY

down from lateral gullies ; but the general tone of the scenery was funereal and grey, the gaunt and treeless peaks rising to a height of from 10,000 feet to 14,000 feet on either side, while snow-crowned giants of 20,000 feet keep guard behind, captained by the superb Tirich Mir, a mountain monarch of nearly 25,500 feet, whose shape looms large in every Chitral landscape, and the awe of whose presence has deeply impressed the native inhabitants.

Here perhaps I should say a few preliminary words about the physical features of the region in which my experiences occurred, about its little-known people, and about the circumstances which had, in the previous decade, brought it under the notice of the Government of India, who at that time had not finally made up their minds whether to continue to take an interest in the future fortunes of the little state or to leave it severely alone.

The Yarkhun Valley and the scenery above described are not only typical of the Chitral landscape in general, but indicate the predominant physical characteristics of that state. Could the traveller mount in a balloon and float in the air from the northern to the southern confines of Chitral territory—a distance of some 200 miles—he would see below him only a sea of mountains, ridge succeeding ridge, a panorama of snow and ice and verdureless rock. It would seem to him a fearful and a forbidding country. Hardly at the bottom of the winding gorges would he discern the isolated patches, where water has converted the arid slopes into delicious parterres of green. Nor would he



dream of the rich crops of fruit and grain which the strong and steady sun can win from the rugged soil, wherever the valleys widen out a little or the industry of man has carried the life-bestowing stream. Chitral, considered in its wider application as including both Yasin and Mastuj, practically consists of seven such valleys, with a general inclination from north to south, and one transverse valley, that of the Ghizar River, running from east to west.

Its northern boundary is the "Great Snowy Mountains", as the main range of the Hindu Kush was happily designated by the early Buddhist pilgrims. On the east it is bounded by Hunza and the petty state of Punial, and further to the south by the great mountains that shut in the gorges and clans of the Indus Kohistan. On the extreme south it touches Dir territory below the Lowarai Pass, and Afghan territory near Asmar. On the west its borders run with Badakshan in the north, and lower down with the mountain haunts of the Kafirs, acknowledged since 1898 to be within the political limits of Afghanistan. The total area thus embraced is some 9000 square miles. Its population, confined for the most part to the levels between 4000 and 8000 feet, had been commonly reckoned as 70,000, but had been reduced by more careful analysis to a probable total of not more than 50,000 persons. The people themselves call their country Chitral; Kashkar is the name given to it by Pathans and Pushtu-speaking folk. Upper Chitral (*i.e.* Yasin, Ghizar, and Mastuj)—which were for long under the Khushwakt yoke—is commonly known as Khush-

wakto Mehtari (*i.e.* dominion), while the districts below Mastuj bear the exclusive appellation of Chitral. The situation of the country on the main and shortest line of communication between the Punjab and Afghanistan and the Oxus, and in close proximity to the easiest passes over the Hindu Kush, had always given to Chitral an importance in excess of its intrinsic capacities. Traders, pilgrims, and warring tribesmen had passed up and down its highland tracks, which, though until a few years earlier entirely unknown to Englishmen, had been for centuries among the best trodden in Central Asia. To the Emperor Baber the country was known as Katur, from the name of its ruling family. It formed a portion of the territory obscurely described in earlier annals, with varying and often inconsistent boundaries, as Bolor.

Corresponding to the extremes of elevation are those of climate and temperature. In winter the valleys are buried in snow, and even the light-hearted national character is not impervious to the prevailing gloom. In spring and summer the sun shines gloriously, all nature breaks into song and laughter, and life is spent almost entirely in the open air. A double crop is gathered from the irrigated ground; wheat and barley in the spring; Indian corn and millet and rice (which has a great reputation in the surrounding districts) in the autumn. The holdings are very small, twenty acres being a quite exceptional property, and the average size being from one to two acres. The cultivable area, however, forms so small a proportion of the entire country that the grain

supply is little more than sufficient for the needs of the population. Fruit, on the other hand, positively abounds: melons, pomegranates, apples, pears, grapes, walnuts, mulberries, apricots (which are dried and exported, and are a staple article of food); and delightful was it, at the end of a long ride under the hot sun, to dismount beneath the trees of a village orchard and, reclining on the ground, to feast on the pears and apricots and grapes that were brought in unlimited quantity on big platters by the local headman. Of flocks and herds, there are not a great many cattle, but numerous sheep and goats. Most of the ponies that I saw were said to have come from Badakshan, which is a great breeding country; but donkeys are indigenous.

The people of Chitral occupy a very distinct and unmistakable place among the Aryan tribes of the Hindu Kush. The majority speak an unwritten language of their own named Khowar, although Persian is the official and lettered tongue. Burishki is spoken in the Yasin Valley, Shina in the Ghizar Valley, and other dialects in outlying parts. But the people are extraordinarily illiterate; and Captain Younghusband told me that he did not think there were a dozen persons in the whole country who could either read or write. As regards religion, the bulk are Sunni Mohammedans of an indifferent type, this being the faith of the ruling family, but Shiah and Maulais are also found. There is no fanaticism, however, in Chitral. Unlike the neighbouring states of Bajaur and Swat, the *mullahs* had very little influence, and would find the greatest difficulty in

raising a *jehad* or religious war. In appearance the Chitralis are of fairer complexion than many of their neighbours, having occasionally even blue eyes and light hair, though the prevailing type is dark or black-haired, with the locks sometimes hanging in poetical ringlets upon the shoulders, sometimes tied up in a bunch or in curls upon either side. The men are rather short of stature, but of muscular frame and wiry build.

There is something attractive, though little of real fibre, in the national character. They are a gay and impressionable race, somewhat indolent of habit, and addicted to the *dolce far niente*; simple-minded, warm-hearted, excitable, loving a jest, but possessing neither the masculine energy nor the warlike capacities that render the Hunza men the pick of the Hindu Kush tribes. The Chitralis are not natural fighters like the Pathans; and it would be quite a mistake to suppose that the skill and bravery shown in the famous siege six months after my visit had much to do with them. It was the contribution of Umra Khan's men from Bajaur, who conducted the entire operations, and infused into the Chitrali attack a spirit which it would never of itself have possessed.

Perhaps, however, the most salient Chitrali characteristic is their almost Grecian love for sport and dancing and song. Chitral is renowned for its hawks and falcons, which are caught in traps and exported to neighbouring countries, as much as from £2 to £3 being often paid for a single bird. Every man of position, as he rides forth for recreation—

and very often two men will be astride of the same steed—carries his hawk upon his gloved right hand, while his attendants follow with one or two more birds; and there is for ever imprinted on the retina of my memory the sight of the Governor of the Yarkhun Valley, who rode with me for two days—a gallant old gentleman of some sixty or more years of age, with a magnificent beard stained a rich red, and enormous moustachios that protruded for several inches on either side of his face (he boasted, and probably with truth, that they were the finest in the Hindu Kush), his head wrapped round with a splendid gold and red turban, a grey velvet *choga* or cloak hanging on his shoulders, and his little boy sitting behind him on the saddle and clinging round his father's waist. This brave old sportsman rode with me hour after hour the whole day through with his hawk on his wrist, and when any quarry rose, whether quail or pigeon or duck, he let fly the bird, galloping after it to take it again on to his hand. Mehtar Nizam-ul-Mulk was also devoted to the sport, and was always attended by his hawks when we went out riding. He told me he had killed as many as thirty quail in a single day.

Not less fond are the Chitralis of dancing; and the Mehtar organised for my entertainment, while at Chitral, a nocturnal performance round an immense bonfire. Dancing is confined to the male sex, and admits if not of grace, at least of agility. One old gentleman I remember, of at least sixty years, whose bare legs were imperfectly draped by a sort of brown dressing-gown, and who pirouetted round

with as much gravity, and amid as great applause, as though he had been Taglioni herself. There was also some rude but effective acting, a mimic combat taking place between some supposed Kafirs, rude half-clad fellows with wild locks, armed only with sticks, and a party of Afghans (who, as Pathans, are detested by the Chitralis), in which the Kafirs scattered and floored the Afghans amid shouts of laughter. The singing also I heard, but did not admire. One further characteristic I recall of the light-hearted, pleasure-loving Chitralis, viz. their fondness for flowers. I constantly noticed men wearing a yellow or other blossom tucked in their thick lovelocks, just as a clerk behind an English counter might carry his pen behind the ear.

The Chitrali dress is somewhat sober in colour, except upon festive occasions, but is well adapted to the extremes of climate which are encountered, and to a social condition in which wealth is rare. It consists of the brown woollen cap with rolled-up brim, common to the entire borderland, but replaced in the case of the upper classes and officials by a turban; of a *choga* or loose long coat of the same material; of white cotton drawers, and coloured worsted stockings tucked into a soft leather boot. The Mehtar gave me a *choga* faced with parti-coloured Bokharan silk. It makes an excellent dressing-gown, and I rarely put it on without thinking of that poor murdered man.

A class of hereditary nobles exists in Chitral, named Adamzadehs, to whose ranks promotion is also possible by favour of the ruler. These nobles

are themselves untaxed, and are the owners of inalienable lands and villages ; but their loyalty to the central power is secured by the wise custom of requiring their presence and attendance upon the Mehtar during a few months of each year at Chitral itself, where they are entertained and given presents by him. The next or middle class is called Arbab, but this is a term not in common use. The lower class, which is thought to represent the original inhabitants of the country, is named Fakir Maskin. They also are brought in touch with the capital and the ruler, each village in Chitral being bound in turn to furnish a contingent as bodyguard to the Mehtar, who arms and feeds them while in his service.

Probably, however, the respect in which the Chitralis differ most pointedly from European standards is in their unabashed disregard for the sanctity of human life. People sometimes wonder why such strange and murderous deeds should be committed in those remote regions, and how it is that instances of chivalry seem to be not inconsistent with the most revolting acts. The reason lies in the prevalent contempt for human life as such. There is neither law nor custom against the shedding of blood ; and no deterrent beyond lack of opportunity or fear of revenge restrains the would-be assassin. The existence of this unblushing code, recalling the Italy of the early Renaissance period, is fitly illustrated in the history of Chitral, which, until British influence supervened, was artistically diapered with records of intrigue, treachery, and assassination. In the narrative to which I now turn

there are as many instances of cold-blooded murder, and probably more of parricide, fratricide, and the various forms of domestic crime, than could probably be found within a corresponding period in the history of any not purely barbarian state.

Up to 1889 the kingdom was divided into two parts—Lower and Upper Chitral, which were ruled by two branches of what had originally been one family, springing from a common ancestor of Persian extraction. The rulers of Chitral proper, designated by the Persian title of Mehtar (signifying "greater"), belonged to the Katur family; those of Upper Chitral, which included Mastuj and Yasin, were of the Khushwakt stock. The two families squabbled, fought, and alternated emulous spasms of assassination with fitful intervals of reconciliation and repose. It was reserved for the Mehtar, known as Aman-ul-Mulk, a ruler who typified and reproduced in exaggerated form in his own person alike the best and worst qualities of his race, to terminate the long domestic schism by expelling his Khushwakt rivals from Upper Chitral and bringing the entire country under the Katur sway. Starting as the younger son of the ruler of less than half the modern kingdom, he ousted and killed his elder brother, who was Mehtar in about 1856. To make himself additionally secure he removed his next brother also. The next twenty years were spent in alternate conflicts and truces with the Yasin chieftains, who were successively Mir Wali (Hayward's murderer)<sup>1</sup> and Pahlwan Bahadur, the two sons of the formidable and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* p. 171.



ferocious Gauhar Aman. Finally, in 1880, he conquered and expelled Pahlwan, who was the son of his (Aman-ul-Mulk's) sister, and had also married his daughter, occupied the whole of the Khushwakt country, and replaced the reigning family by his own sons, appointing Nizam-ul-Mulk, the eldest, governor of Yasin, and Afzul-ul-Mulk, the second, governor of Mastuj, with the Ghizar valley divided between them.

Aman-ul-Mulk was a ruler of no mean capacity. Unscrupulous, greedy, and deceitful, but quick-witted, imperious, and astute, he was the very man for such a state and for such times. In his declining years, when over seventy years of age, he became toothless and feeble. But for forty years of his life he was the leading figure in the Hindu Kush region. Endowed with great personal and physical vigour, the most renowned polo player, even up to an advanced age, of his time, he was the husband of many wives and the father of nearly seventy children. Perhaps in nothing did he show his shrewdness more evidently than in the clever manner in which he invoked Kashmir assistance—thereby first coming into contact with Great Britain—in order to expedite his personal and dynastic ambitions.

Formerly Chitral had been dependent upon Badakshan, and later on had paid tribute to the Amir of Kabul, after Badakshan had passed by conquest into his hands. In 1874 Aman-ul-Mulk had even gone so far as to betroth his daughter to Abdulla Jan, the heir of Amir Shir Ali Khan. In 1876, however, these arrangements having broken

down, and an Afghan force threatening to advance into his country, Aman-ul-Mulk found extraneous assistance imperative, and sought the protection of Kashmir. In the same year, Captain Biddulph was the first Englishman to visit his country. Lord Lytton, who, in view of the continuous advance of Russia in Central Asia, was wisely anxious to secure an indirect control of the Hindu Kush states, advised the Maharaja of Kashmir to accept the proffered allegiance, and promised him, if by such action he became involved in military operations, to afford him countenance and military aid. In the following year an agreement was signed between Chitral and Kashmir, by which the latter undertook to protect Chitral from Afghan aggression, receiving an acknowledgement of allegiance, and a nominal tribute of horses, hawks, and hounds, and giving a subsidy of 8000 rupees in return, this being a price which Kashmir was nothing loth to pay in order to purchase immunity for Gilgit from Chitral raids. Thus strengthened, Aman-ul-Mulk made short work of his opponents, and acquired the undisputed rule of a dominion that stretched from Ishkumman almost to Asmar. It must not be supposed that any motives other than those of self-interest were responsible for the loyalty of Aman-ul-Mulk to this new connection. He was constantly trimming between the rival allegiances, and even intriguing with Afghanistan. No one, however, knew better on which side his bread was really buttered; and when Captain Biddulph (who had in the meantime been appointed British Political Officer at Gilgit) was

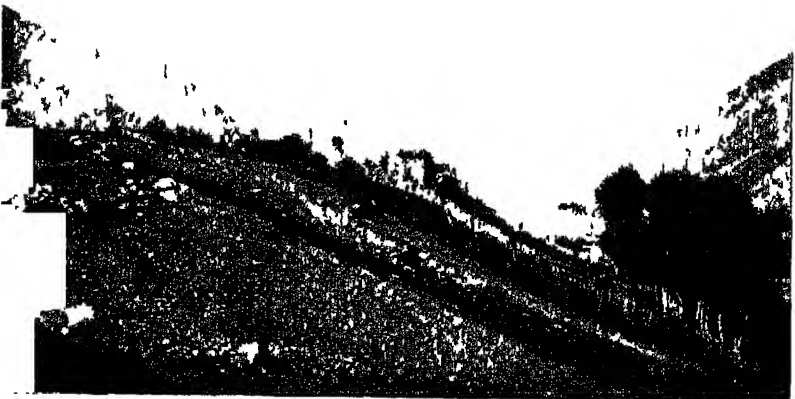
invested by Pahlwan Bahadur at Sher Kila in Punial in 1880, he advanced to his assistance, and crushed his son-in-law and ancient foe. In 1881 he applied to be admitted to direct political relationship with the Indian Government, but was refused. The Kashmir subsidy was, however, doubled in that year.

Such was the state of affairs until the imminence of war between England and Russia in the spring of 1885 rendered it desirable that the British Government should know a little more of what was passing in those distant regions, and should exercise over the inclinations of their rulers a rather less fortuitous control. In 1881 Major Biddulph had been withdrawn from his post of observation at Gilgit. But in 1885 an imposing Mission, consisting of Colonel (afterwards Sir W.) Lockhart, who was destined thirteen years later to be my first Commander-in-Chief in India, Colonel Woodthorpe, Captain Barrow, and Dr. Giles, was dispatched to Chitral to enter into a definite agreement with Aman-ul-Mulk. The Mission met with a most friendly reception from the Mehtar, and remained at Chitral from September to November, returning again after a visit to Hunza and an exploration of the upper Oxus Valley in the spring of the ensuing year. In the agreement which was concluded Aman-ul-Mulk thus expressed himself: "I, an eater of the salt of the English, will serve them body and soul. Should any enemy of theirs attempt to pass through this quarter I will hold the roads and passes with my loins girt until they send me help." The Mehtar received corresponding assurances, and a present of Sniders in





OLD FORT AT GILGH



YASIN FORT AND VALLEY

return. Early in 1886 he sent his eldest son, Nizam-ul-Mulk, and late in 1887 his second son, Afzul-ul-Mulk, down to India. Both young men were greatly impressed by what they saw, and carried back to their native country a very different conception of the British power from that which had hitherto prevailed. The British Mission when they retired left a native officer as British Agent at Chitral.

Colonel Lockhart had reported in favour of the acquisition of Gilgit by the Indian Government, and of the formation of a British cantonment there. As these proposals, however, were found to involve a considerable expenditure of money they were not adopted in that form ; but in 1888 the late Colonel A. Durand was sent on a mission to Gilgit and Chitral to work out a plan for the re-establishment of a British Agency on a more moderate scale. The result was his own appointment as British Agent at Gilgit in the following year. The relations between the Indian Government and Chitral now assumed a more definite shape, the former henceforward sharing with the Kashmir Durbar the obligations of a suzerainty which the vassal-state was not less anxious to recognise. Visiting Aman-ul-Mulk in the same year (1889), Colonel Durand and Dr. Robertson found the Mehtar very ready that roads should be made through his country, and desirous to fortify the defensive positions. A further present of Sniders was made to him, and the Kashmir subsidy was supplemented by an annual allowance of 6000 rupees from the Indian Government. Meanwhile events were marching rapidly on the Pamirs, and the

transfrontier menace, against which a policy of cismontane precaution was but an elementary safeguard, drew the two parties on the British side of the threatened border into still closer relations. In 1887 the French expedition of M. Bonvalot, after crossing the Pamirs, had made a venturous sally into Chitral, but had come to grief at Mastuj, being only rescued therefrom in a state of destitution by the courtesy of Lord Dufferin. But in August 1891 the Russian Colonel Yonoff had repeated the experiment with a body of armed men, and it was known that the ambitions of his countrymen, which had already prompted Captain Grombchevski's dalliance with the Mir of Hunza, did not exclude a similar flirtation with the Mehtar of Chitral. It was decided to strengthen the position of the latter, and in October 1891 the British contribution to his subsidy was doubled, while small annual allowances were granted to the three most prominent of his sons, the condition being attached that the telegraph line should be extended from Gilgit to Chitral, and that a British officer should at an early date be permanently appointed to his Court. Some Mohammedan non-commissioned officers from the Indian army were at the same time sent to Chitral to instruct the Mehtar's troops in the use of the Snider rifle. In the same winter occurred the brilliant little Hunza-Nagar campaign.

Such was the state of affairs when, on August 30, 1892, Aman-ul-Mulk, who though more than seventy years of age, and of failing vigour, might yet have been expected to live for several years, suddenly died

while in durbar. Rumours of poison were an unconscious tribute to Chitrali morality rather than an induction from established facts. Among the large family whom he left behind, three sons, of whom two have been already mentioned by name, were, by reason either of their birth or of their character, especially conspicuous. These were Nizam-ul-Mulk, the eldest legitimate son, who was Governor of Yasin, but who could not be said to have inherited his father's strength of tenacity of purpose, and who had not produced an agreeable impression upon the members of the Lockhart Mission; Afzul-ul-Mulk, his younger brother, who was Governor of Mastuj, an ambitious, reckless, and popular young man; and the son of an inferior wife, Shah-ul-Mulk, who was the most cultivated of the family. Aman-ul-Mulk had designated no heir, and the question of the succession, in a country where no fixed law prevails, had long been a source of anticipated trouble both to the Indian Government and in Chitral itself. Afzul-ul-Mulk being in Chitral when his father died, cut the knot by assuming the succession and installing himself as Mehtar at once. In true Chitrali fashion he murdered his brothers Shah-ul-Mulk and Bahram, and set off to fight his elder brother, Nizam. The latter fled in alarm to Gilgit, where he threw himself upon British protection. Afzul-ul-Mulk then wrote to the Viceroy, announcing, with a daring euphemism, that he had succeeded to the throne "with the unanimous consent of his brothers", and asked to be recognised as Mehtar, and to have a British officer deputed to Chitral. The Indian Government, not



fully acquainted with the facts, and favourably disposed towards Afzul ever since the Lockhart Mission, somewhat prematurely acceded. All seemed to have turned out well for the ambitions of the usurper.

There happened, however, to be an elder member of the family, a brother of the late Mehtar, Sher Afzul by name, who had himself, by a judicious flight, escaped being murdered by Aman-ul-Mulk many years before, and who, having been for long an exile from the country in Kabul, was at this time in Badakshan. He had a large following in the southern part of the Chitral Valley. Collecting a band as he proceeded, and disguising them as a Badakshani caravan, he crossed the Dorah Pass, swiftly descended upon Chitral, and finding the gates of the fort open upon his arrival, on the night of November 6, straightway entered in. Afzul-ul-Mulk, coming to the doorway of the tower to ascertain what was going on, was shot dead; and the uncle established himself as Mehtar in his place. Now, however, was the time for the rightful heir to move. Encouraged by the British representative at Gilgit, escorted by Hunza and Puniali levies, and backed by the moral support of some British-Indian troops, who were moved forward in ostensible aid to his advance, Nizam-ul-Mulk, exhibiting a courage with which no one had credited him, set out from Gilgit, marched towards Mastuj and Chitral, exchanged a few shots with the enemy at Drasan, and entered Chitral without impediment, his uncle anticipating his arrival by flight. By December the rightful heir was duly installed as Mehtar, three



BASSIN FORT DORAH VALLEY



AT THE HEAD OF THE DORAH VALLEY



months having witnessed the same number of occupants of the throne. Sher Afzul retired once again to Kabul, where it was made a part of the Durand Agreement with the Amir in September 1893, that he should be kept safely interned.

Nizam's first act was to ask Colonel Durand to send him a British officer ; and on January 1, 1893, Dr. (afterwards Sir G.) Robertson and Captain Younghusband, with an escort of fifty Sikhs, started for Chitral. When Dr. Robertson returned in May, Captain Younghusband and the Sikhs were left in order to give security to the new Mehtar. The position of the latter was for some time precarious. In Chitral the Adamzadehs were suspicious of a ruler of whose ability to maintain his position they did not feel assured. Members of the Khushwakt family threatened trouble in Yasin, and in the south a larger cloud was already gathering upon the horizon. A turbulent and formidable Pathan chieftain named Umra Khan, who, though originally only the petty chief of Jandol, had aggrandised himself at the expense of all his neighbours, fighting the Afghans, ejecting Mohammed Sherif, the Khan of Dir, and defeating both the Swatis and the Mohmands, had also upon the death of Aman-ul-Mulk (one of whose daughters he had married) advanced into Chitral territory and seized Narsat Fort, only forty miles from Chitral. With him was Amir-ul-Mulk, his wife's brother, and half-brother of Nizam ; and the two were understood to be intriguing against the new Mehtar in that quarter. In these circumstances Nizam, conscious of the moral weight that his

position derived from the avowed protection and backing of the Indian Government, requested, in May 1893, that "two or three British officers, with one hundred or more or less number of Sepoys, should remain permanently in Chitral, and should build a cantonment wherever they desired", and that the telegraph wire should be extended to Chitral. The Indian Government doubled the number of the escort, but withdrew Captain Younghusband to Mastuj, being apparently of opinion that whilst at that distance (66 miles) a British officer could give to the Mehtar the requisite encouragement and support, he would escape the entanglements that might ensue from a too close propinquity to an unstable *régime*. Lord Kimberley, however, then Secretary of State for India, while admitting that "the near prospect of the Russian occupation of the Pamirs extending to the north bank of the Panja, which is less than a day's march from the Chitral frontier, renders it a matter of importance to us to be able to control the external affairs of Chitral", only sanctioned the retention of Captain Younghusband as a temporary measure; and in January 1894 instructions were sent to Kashmir that he should be withdrawn at the close of the winter. In June, however, of the same year, the Pamir difficulty with Russia not being yet disposed of, the demarcation of the Chitrali-Afghan frontier, under the Durand Agreement (which had been concluded in the previous autumn) not having taken place, and Umra Khan still causing trouble in the south, the withdrawal of Captain Younghusband, though still maintained in principle, was postponed





VI THE TOP OF THE BAROGHIL PASS LOOKING BACK  
OVER THE YARKHUN VALLEY



VII VIEW TOWARDS THE HEAD OF THE YARKHUN VALLEY

for another year. The Mehtar's repeated appeals that the officer should be stationed, not at Mastuj, where in an emergency he would be helpless and useless, but at Chitral, which had not previously produced much effect, were thought "to be supported by weighty reasons, and to deserve consideration" by Sir H. Fowler, who had become Secretary of State in 1894. But no action had been taken in this direction; neither had any one dared to tell the Mehtar of the impending total withdrawal, when I rode down to Chitral in 1894, the first Englishman, not on official duty, who had so far proceeded to that remote but interesting spot.<sup>1</sup>

I have narrated these proceedings at some length because they are typical of the steps by which the Indian Government has often been compelled, with genuine reluctance, to extend its responsibilities, and because they were the prelude to the bloody drama which was to be enacted so soon after my visit, and the later and peaceful sequel to which I was myself as Viceroy to supervise.

After three days' marching down the Yarkhun Valley from the Baroghil Pass, I was met at a distance of some miles from Mastuj by Captain Younghusband, and we rode in together to that place. Here the valley broadened out, and its bottom was filled by a

<sup>1</sup> The previous visitors were Biddulph in 1878, the Lockhart Mission in 1885-6, Ney Elias in 1886, Durand and Robertson in 1888 and onwards, Captain Tyler in 1890, Younghusband, Bruce, and Gurdon in 1893. Alexander Gardner alleged that he went to Chitral, and he probably did so, although from the MS. of his travels, written down from memory in the later years of his life, other travellers who have seen it as well as myself have been unable to trace the steps of his journey.



big flat plain, much of which was swamp, and the rest coarse grass. In the distance the magnificent cone of Tirich Mir closed the valley, and soared grandly into the air. On a sloping plateau or fan above the valley-bottom were situated the tiny village and dilapidated fort of Mastuj, where the British escort of a hundred Sikhs were stationed under the command of Licutenant Harley, who afterwards so greatly distinguished himself and won the D.S.O. at Chitral. The governor, Bahadur Khan, Mehtar Jao (*i.e.* a Mehtar's son), being a younger brother of Aman-ul-Mulk, a pleasant old gentleman, with henna-dyed beard, came out to greet me, and we rode in to the music of the village band and dismounted under an immense solitary *chenar* (plane) outside the fort. Mastuj, from its position at the confluence of the Yarkhun and Laspur rivers, has always been a place of some importance. The Emperor Timur passed several times this way in his campaigns in Kafiristan and Chitral. The place also endured a seven months' siege from the Chinese during the reign of Shah Khush Ahmed.

Mastuj Fort was a typical Chitrali structure, consisting of a walled enclosure fifty yards square, the curtain being about twenty feet in height, with four square towers fifteen feet higher at the angles, and a lower tower over the gateway. The whole was built of stones, timber, and mud. The place illustrated both the discomforts of Chitrali existence and the artistic aptitudes of the people. For whilst to get to my room, which was the principal one in the building, and had been occupied by Afzul-ul-Mulk when





*From the News Agency*

ROPE BRIDGE ACROSS THE JHILUM RIVER

Governor, I had to crawl along a low tunnel and climb a rickety ladder, the room itself contained a good deal of old wood-carving on the pillars and cornice. The light was admitted and smoke escaped by a hole in the roof. The British officers camped in tents in the garden (which was inside the walls), and the mess-room was a sort of elevated loggia overlooking the latter, and adorned with rude frescoes by Afzul's men. In this fort a force of 46 Sikhs and 250 Kashmir troops, under Captain Bretherton and Lieutenant Moberly, was invested for eighteen days in March and April of the following year, until relieved by Colonel Kelly's column from Chitral.

From Mastuj I rode down to Chitral with Captain Younghusband in two days, the first being on the right and the remainder on the left bank of the river, which is crossed half a mile below Mastuj by a rope bridge, and a mile above Buni, where the stream is narrower, by a rope and twig bridge. This was my first experience of crossing a rope bridge or *jhula*, which, however, is a misnomer, seeing that the bridge is not made of a rope at all, but of birch or willow twigs twisted together into a stout cable. Three of these cables, somewhat loosely tied together, constitute the foot-rope, which hangs in a deep curve across the river or gorge that requires to be bridged. The breadth of the combined strands is from six to eight inches, but as the withes by which they are held together are continually breaking, it frequently happens that one cable sags more than its fellow, and the passenger has to be careful of his footing. The usual plan is to go across slowly, planting the

feet, turned outwards, one immediately in front of the other. At a distance of from two to three feet above the foot-rope are suspended on either side two side-cables, similarly composed, to act as hand-rails. These are attached to the foot-rope by a succession of V-shaped ties, and are sometimes held apart from each other at the top by cross-sticks, over which the passenger has, in addition to his other perils, to step. All three cables are securely lashed at the land ends round heavy logs which are buried on the two banks in big hummocks of stones. At the start, therefore, both foot and side ropes are almost in the same plane, and one has to scramble down upon the rope almost upon one's back. In the middle of the dip the weight of the passenger bellies down the foot-rope, and his hands are sometimes nearly as high as his armpits. As he gets to the other side he has again to scramble forward with his hands down to his knees. The entire structure, though stoutly made, looks very frail, and has a detestable habit of swinging, particularly in at all a high wind, that takes the heart out of some people. On the present occasion nothing would induce one of my companions, Lieut. Harley, who was shortly to win the D.S.O. for conspicuous bravery, to cross the rope bridge below Mastuj, and he preferred to swim the river, which was very swift and full, on horseback at a spot lower down where there was a so-called but very dangerous ford. The most remarkable lady traveller of my knowledge once came to a Tibetan river spanned by one of these bridges after a journey of uncommon hardship and exposure.

She absolutely declined to cross it, and preferred to be taken over on an improvised raft of inflated goat-skins, upon which she ran a very excellent risk of being drowned. On the other hand, the majority of persons soon get used to the *jhula*, and experience no alarm. I did not cross many myself, but I confess that I did not find these either difficult or terrifying. If the bridge is in good condition, and the cables are intact, it is almost impossible—unless a man completely loses his head—to fall in. The main difficulties arise from the swaying of the ropes and the dizzy rush of the torrent, which is sometimes only a few inches below one's feet in mid-stream (though elsewhere, in the case of deep gorges, from 100 to 200 feet underneath), and from the sharp ends and twigs that project from the hand-rails and catch in one's sleeves or gloves. The natives often cross these bridges in parties of from six to a dozen at a time, and will even carry other men or animals over on their backs; though should the bridge break, as it is apt to do when so presumed upon, the whole of those upon it are in all probability drowned. At about six miles below Mastuj I remember riding along a stony place on the right bank, that descended in a long slope from the foot of the mountains to the river. The latter at this point flowed right up against the left cliff-wall of the valley, which was from side to side about a mile in width. There was nothing to indicate that the sloping plain was anything but continuous, until suddenly we came upon a prodigious cleft or *nullah*, with perpendicular walls, cut like a gash to the depth of

some 250 feet through the plain down to the level of the river, into which flowed a stream that trickled at its bottom. The track zigzagged steeply down one wall of this astonishing cañon, and clambered up the other. I thought this a most remarkable natural phenomenon, and learned that it was known as the Nisa Gol, and was famous for the fights which had often taken place there, and for its supposed impregnability. Six months later it was held in strength against the English, with *sangars* on the lip of the *nullah*, by the Chitrali army which had withdrawn from Mastuj, but was taken with the utmost gallantry by Colonel Kelly's force on April 30, 1895. The main body with the guns advanced across the plain and shelled the *sangars*, while the enemy's flank was turned and their position rendered untenable by the action of the Hunza and Puniali levies, who scaled the mountain heights to the right.

At more than one other place I passed over ground that was destined half a year later to become historic. Six miles below Buni, on the left bank, is the tiny hamlet of Koragh, and between this and Reshun the valley is contracted into a narrow ravine, where the track crosses steep shaly slopes of detritus, or skirts the cliffs that descend sharply to the water's edge. It is a rough and trying stage, and it told so severely on the pony I was riding, which had been a gift from the Mehtar to Younghusband, that it began to spit blood, and I had to dismount and lead it into Reshun, where it died in the course of the night. This was the spot where Captain Ross (whom I had met at Gilgit), starting with a detachment of Sikhs

to the relief of Lieutenants Fowler and Edwardes, who, with a party of sappers and Bengal infantry, were believed to be in danger at Reshun, suddenly found himself cut off in front and behind, the enemy hurling rocks down the steep shoots and firing from *sangars* on both banks of the river. After a gallant resistance and repeated attempts to cut his way through, Ross and forty-six of the Sikhs and nine camp-followers were killed, and Lieutenant Jones and fourteen Sikhs, of whom ten were wounded, managed, under heavy fire, to get back to Buni. This happened on March 10, 1895.

At Reshun, Younghusband and I camped under the trees of a delightful orchard bordering on the polo ground. Adjoining this were a number of houses, in which, while Ross and Jones were fruitlessly struggling to their rescue, Edwardes and Fowler, with sixty-two men, for five days held out against an overwhelming force of the enemy, until, on March 15, an armistice having been declared, they were captured by treachery on the polo ground, and were carried off first to Chitral and afterwards by Umra Khan to his fort at Barwa in Jandol.<sup>1</sup> More serious, however, even than this catastrophe was the capture by the enemy of no fewer than 34,000 rounds of ammunition in the British camp. A few hours later these were in the hands of the beleaguering force that was hard pressing Robertson and his brave 500 in the fort at Chitral; and who

<sup>1</sup> Umra Khan treated both officers well, hoping by their ultimate release, which took place a month later, to stave off the retribution which awaited him from the relieving force of General Low.



knows how many a British bullet found its billet there among the heroic defenders of the British flag?

As we descended the valley the scenery became prettier and more romantic, if the defile did not itself become less rugged than in its higher portions. On each alluvial fan to which water could be brought from the hills above was planted a village with its orchard trees and well-cultivated plots; and the dark green patches stood out as sharply from the gaunt background as does a Persian plain village against the stark desolation of the desert. Where there was no water, all was lifeless and grim as death itself. Fans would be seen with soil not less favourable or more obdurate than that of their neighbours, but either no streams descended from the mountains, or such as did had bored a furrow from 100 to 150 feet in depth—as at the Nisa Gol—right through the soft heart of the slope, and, there being no water-wheels or pumps in Chitral, splashed aimlessly into the river. On the mountains no timber was to be seen till we neared Chitral. In some places the river was contracted to a breadth of a few yards—admitting of being bridged—between confronting cliffs. Elsewhere it spread out in the valley-bottom as broad as the Thames at Oxford.

On the morning of the second day we were met outside the village of Barnas by the young Shuja-ul-Mulk, a good-looking boy of about twelve years of age, a son of the old Mehtar, and half-brother accordingly of Nizam. He lived at Barnas with his foster-father, an Adamzadeh. The boy was brought out to meet us clad in a green velvet tunic, and was lifted on

to his pony. His long black hair hung in ringlets on either side of his face, and was matched in colour by a pair of very large and piercing eyes, the lower eyelids of which were pencilled with henna. His mouth and teeth were prominent, and were said to resemble greatly the early pictures of his father, Aman-ul-Mulk. The lad wore an intelligent expression, but had nothing to say. We consumed apricots and pears together in an orchard ; but little did either of us think that in less than six months he would be elevated to the *musnud* of Chitral.

The next stage was Koghazi, where the village headman, a forbidding-looking individual, with black hair in curls, a big stomach, and a round fat face like that of a mediaeval abbot, entertained us with the luscious small seedless grapes of the country. Pressing on, we found that the road had been specially repaired for us by order of the Mehtar, and that new galleries had been built out where the *paris* were particularly stiff. Soon we were met by some of Nizam's ministers, who gave me friendly greeting, and escorted us to a spot where, in a narrow and rocky defile by the river's edge, the Mehtar was seen approaching at the head of a cavalcade. This was about four miles from Chitral. Nizam dismounted and I did the same, and we met and saluted each other on foot. His appearance and build were singularly unlike those of the average Chitrali. Indeed, his light curly hair, moustache, and beard might have adorned the face of any Englishman. An irresolute, amiable expression pervaded his features, and his manner and movements, until he recovered

confidence, were timid and almost cringing. But this shyness wore off completely as we became better acquainted, and although of weak character and debauched habits, he never in any situation looked anything but a gentleman. On this occasion he wore a smart green velvet suit, the tunic and trousers of which were decorated by broad gold braid, the production of his Kokandi court tailor. Nizam-ul-Mulk was at this time thirty-three or thirty-four years of age; but the Nemesis of his country and his race was already hovering unsuspected above his head, and he was never to see another birthday.

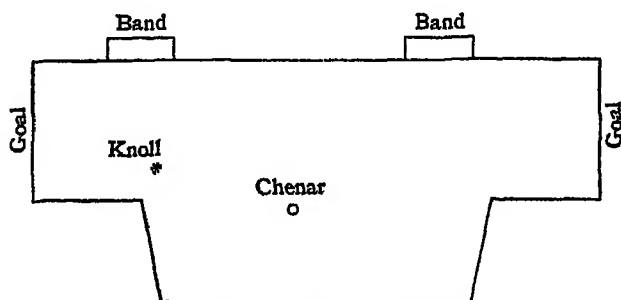
Having cleared the defile, we were met by a party of some hundred mounted men, and the whole cavalcade streamed amid clouds of dust along the open plain, across the fields, and over the low stone walls. Soon we came to a place where shooting from horseback at full gallop at a gourd filled with ashes, swinging from the top of a pole, was performed for my entertainment. This is one of the favourite national sports. Resuming our way, we crossed the river by the Chitral Bridge, a single-span timber structure, built on the cantilever principle, forty-five yards long by four feet wide, and guarded by a gatehouse on the near side, and by two stone towers on the opposite bank. We dismounted, the Mehtar, according to the polite fashion of the country in escorting a guest, holding me by the hand. As we drew near to the fort, which is about half a mile below the bridge, the entire population turned out to meet us; two brass six-pounders, the gift of the Indian Government, boomed a formal salute, and—

a most picturesque and novel spectacle—the crest of the hills was lined for over a quarter of a mile by several hundred men, who with matchlocks fired a noisy *feu de joie* into the air. The men of the Mehtar's bodyguard, a hundred strong, in white drawers and old scarlet tunics, purchased at Peshawur, were drawn up outside the fort. Leaving the latter below us to the left, we mounted somewhat higher up the hill, passed through Chitral *serai*—an enclosure surrounded by low mud houses, where the Peshawri and Badakshani merchants deposit their goods, and which was the only semblance of a bazaar in the entire region of the Hindu Kush—crossed a *nullah*, down which trickled a scanty stream, and reached a house and grounds that had been prepared for my reception. In the garden were pitched a tent and *shamiana* that had been presented by Sir W. Lockhart to Aman-ul-Mulk when he left Chitral.

These quarters were those that had been placed at the disposal of the British Agent when at Chitral. Subsequently during the siege they were occupied by our arch-enemy, the meteoric uncle, Sher Afzul ; but again, when the siege was over, they became the headquarters of the British officers. Immediately behind the garden enclosure was the burial-ground of the reigning family of Chitral. By far the largest grave, in deference I imagine to his great reputation, was that of Aman-ul-Mulk, which was a lofty rectangular mound, faced on all sides with stone ; and with the two curving isolated stones that are usually planted on the top of Chitrali tombs fixed in the ground at the head and foot. Afzul-ul-Mulk's was

a smaller grave, with no marks of distinction. Adjoining the graveyard was the Jumma Musjid or town mosque of Chitral, an unpretentious building.

During my stay in Chitral I was shown such sights as the place contained or admitted of. A game of polo was organised ; but it struck me that, though better mounted, the players did not touch quite the same level of excellence that I had seen at Hunza. Thirteen took part, and the game lasted an hour. The Mehtar was one of the best players, if not the



best. Whenever he got a goal and struck off, galloping down three-quarters of the ground, all the spectators shouted loudly ; and I also remember a short, black-bearded man, whom, as the head of the armed forces of Chitral, we dubbed the commander-in-chief, clad in blue trousers and a purple velvet tunic, who rode like a demon and shouted like a boy. The ground at Chitral was peculiarly shaped. It was on the slope of a hill, and on the upper side had a big bay or extension, with an old *chenar* tree in the middle.

The ground was of turf, but was somewhat cut up

and dusty. Elsewhere in this volume (p. 82) I have described the game of polo as it is, or then was, played in the mountain fastnesses of the Hindu Kush.

I made a careful inspection of the fort, where the Mehtar was residing, and which six months later was to be the scene of one of the most heroic exploits that have ever adorned the page of British history. The fort was a very picturesque structure, rising almost from the river's edge, with its tall angle-towers projecting from the lower walls, the whole from a little distance being embosomed in a wealth of *chenars*, walnuts, and orchard trees. But for purposes of defence it could scarcely have been placed in a worse position, the immediate surroundings affording every opportunity for close-range firing and for sheltered approach, and the interior being commanded from nearly all sides by Martini-fire from the hills. Like all Chitral forts that I saw, the building consisted of a square enclosure quite eighty yards on each face, with walls about twenty-five feet in height, built of unhewn stones held together by transverse tiers and by mud. At each corner was a square tower twenty feet higher, the immense amount of woodwork in these towers, particularly at their outer angles, explaining the constant attempts made by the enemy during the siege to set fire to them. The tower nearest to the *serai* and to Sher Afzul's house was that from which the improvised Union Jack was flown that infused such heart into the defenders. On the north or river face was a waterway running down to the river for a distance of forty yards, protected half-way down by a fifth or water-tower. The

efforts of the besiegers to cut off or to render untenable this waterway, and of the garrison to protect it from a never-ending assault, were among the most thrilling episodes of the subsequent siege. On the east and west faces of the fort were magnificent groves of *chenars*, extending almost up to the walls. Of these the enemy did not fail to make good use. Beneath the clump on the western side was a big open-air terrace, with platforms for the large durbars, overlooking the bend of the river, and in full view of the tutelary presence of Tirich Mir. On its southern and eastern face the fort was surrounded by a garden within a lower wall.

The main entrance was on the western face, nearest to the Chitral Bridge. I passed through a heavy wooden gateway, with a small trap-gate opening in it for use after dark, into a narrow passage where the guard were stationed. This led into the main interior court, entirely surrounded by buildings. On the left hand was a new mosque, an unpretentious open structure with wooden pillars, and with the *kibleh* on the back or west wall, which was being built by the Mehtar; also a new durbar hall with some simple but effective wood-carving. On the opposite side was the tower at the door of which Afzul-ul-Mulk as he came out was shot through the head by Sher Afzul's men. Under a shed were a few guns, including the two mountain-guns that had banged off on the occasion of my arrival. On the right or southern side latticed windows looked down from an upper storey on to the court and betrayed the women's quarters. On the river side, in the

direction of the water-tower, were the stables. These were the main features of the interior as I remember them. For an account of the purposes to which they were put, and of the part which they played in the history of the siege, I must refer my readers to the published accounts of the latter.<sup>1</sup>

It will, however, still be remembered that among its most brilliant incidents was the sally led by my companion, Lieutenant Harley, which resulted in the blowing up of a mine that was being dug by the besiegers towards the gun-tower, at the south-east angle of the fort. This mine led from a summer-house, distant about forty yards from the walls; and in the mouth of the excavation, which was inside this building, thirty-five of the enemy were bayoneted by the Sikhs as they came up from the death-trap, little thinking of their doom. I vividly recollect that garden-house; for in it the Mehtar entertained Captain Younghusband and myself to lunch during our stay. The entrance was laid with stripes of silk and *kincob*, and the meal took place in a room with a veranda round it open to the sky. There were pictures from the English illustrated papers hanging on the walls, among which I detected a portrait of my friend Margot Asquith, who had married her eminent husband a few months before. Which of us then thought that those papers would before long be illustrating the room itself?

<sup>1</sup> *The Relief of Chitral*, by Captains F. E. and G. J. Younghusband, London, 1895; *The Chitral Campaign*, by H. C. Thomson, London, 1895; *With Kelly to Chitral*, London, 1896; and *Chitral: the Record of a Minor Siege*, by Sir G. Robertson, London, 1898.



More interesting, however, at that time than any sight or scene of Chitral was the interview in which the Mehtar, accompanied by his principal ministers, discussed with me the condition and the prospects of his state. We sat in the open air in front of the *shamiana*, in the compound of the British Agent's house, and for over two hours I was kept an attentive listener to their pleadings, their anxieties, and their fears. One might have expected from these remote and inexperienced natives, whose entire life had been spent in isolation from the great hum of the outer world, a want of *savoir faire* or a narrowness of vision in harmony with the restricted outlook of their existence. But there was a certain natural dignity in the speech and bearing of those untutored men; and I have rarely heard an argument more fluently expressed or more cogently sustained. The Mehtar was nervous about the external and internal fortune of his state. Conscious of the manifest insecurity of his own position, and alarmed at the peril that threatened his rule from the turbulent ambitions of neighbouring chieftains, he petitioned earnestly for a more emphatic definition of British responsibilities in connection with Chitral. He asked that the British officer attached to his court and the Indian escort should be stationed, not, as then, at the mistaken post of Mastuj, but at Chitral itself. Had this course been adopted at an earlier date, it is conceivable, in my judgement, that some, at any rate, of the subsequent disasters need never have occurred. He was anxious that roads should be made and the telegraph wire extended through his country. He

wanted to raise a large body of native levies to be trained by British officers. Like his father before him, when Sir W. Lockhart visited Chitral in 1885, he pleaded for a *Sanad* or document recognising the hereditary right of himself and his family to the Mehtarship. In Umra Khan, with prophetic accuracy, he recognised his most dangerous foe ; and he urged that he should be allowed to join with Mohammed Sherif Khan, the evicted ruler of Dir, in expelling the Jandoli chieftain from that state, and at the same time in recovering for himself Narsat, which had been similarly filched from Chitral. Finally, he declared that it was the duty of the Indian Government, on its own account, to crush the pretensions of Umra Khan—a task which, before six months had passed, the consequences of his own assassination were forcibly to impress upon that Government.

On another occasion Younghusband and I saw the Mehtar and his court in a more festive vein ; for with such scanty fare as our resources could produce, consisting of tinned soup, army rations, *pilau*, chicken, stewed pears, two bottles of beer and two of whisky and of ginger-wine, we entertained the whole party to dinner. The Mehtar sat with us at a table in one of the raised recesses of the room ; the rest of the court squatted or lounged on the floor below. They tried our heterogeneous drinks with shouts of delighted laughter, and regaled us with their own music and story. The whisky and the ginger-wine were mixed together—I am not sure that a little beer was not added—and I can recall the sight of one Chitrali nobleman pouring this amazing

concoction down the throat of another, at the same time that he held him by the nose. Among the guests was a blind scion of the old ruling family of Badakshan, who came in and twanged a primitive guitar. Professional Chitrali singers and dancers, all males, added to the prevailing din. One of the Mehtar's brothers, Isfendiar by name, was invited as a musician of more than ordinary repute, and entertained us with a peculiarly lugubrious chant.

But the spectacle that chiefly lingers in my memory was this. I have previously mentioned Amir-ul-Mulk, half-brother and next heir of Nizam, who had already conspired against him, but whom, weakly ignoring the bloody but immutable prescriptions of his family, and regarding him as a semi-idiot, he had invited back to Chitral a few months before from exile with the arch-foe Umra Khan. The Mehtar had specially asked me if I would invite this youth, who was only nineteen years of age, to the banquet, and I had naturally concurred. I observed him standing in the background of the room, a sullen and repulsive figure, with long black locks and a look of gloom. Two months later the Mehtar perished at his fratricidal hands.

On these and on other occasions during my stay, I had opportunities of studying both the character of Nizam, and the position and authority of the Mehtar. Nizam was amiable, good-tempered, and intelligent; but he was not the man either for his people or the times. Both of the latter demanded a ruler cast in the stern and truculent mould of old Aman-ul-Mulk: a tyrant with open manners and

no scruples. Nizam was avaricious, which made him unpopular, and of depraved habits, being addicted to drunkenness and unnatural vices whereby he shocked a not too sensitive public opinion. Nevertheless, it was evident that, quite apart from the personality of its occupant, the position of Mehtar in Chitral was encompassed with a great and traditional respect, apparent in every act and deed. The Mehtar was the centre of every scene, the leader of every proceeding in which he took part; and no subject interfered or participated except at his invitation. The Chitralis are a people tenaciously attached to old observance and custom, including fidelity to the ruling house as such, though not necessarily to its individual members; and they look with a suspicious horror, not upon crime, but upon innovation.

Hence it will readily be understood that the government of Chitral was almost exclusively a personal government. The Mehtar was supreme. He alone had the power of life and death. Theoretically, the whole property of the country belonged to him, and, in more than theory, he actually disposed of the persons and possessions of his subjects. For instance, he might and did give away men's wives. I even heard of a case in which the original husband having condoned his offence, the Mehtar took the wife away from the second husband to whom she had been assigned, and restored her to her former spouse. As Mehtar, he was supreme in judicial as well as in executive authority. Certain penalties, determined by custom, were assigned to

particular crimes. For example, in cases of adultery the injured husband was entitled, and was even bound, to kill both the offending wife and the lover. He was then protected by the Mehtar. But should he kill the wife and not the lover, he was sued as a murderer by the wife's relations. A story was told me of the pursuit of an unfaithful wife and her lover by the husband, in the course of which the lover escaped, while the woman tumbled into the river and was drowned. Upon appeal to the Mehtar, the husband had to pay compensation. In ordinary cases, murder was compounded by a fine to the family of the victim (in all these countries human life has not its actuarial value as here, contingent upon health and probable duration, but its mathematical value, determined by sex, position, and substance), with a *douceur* to the Mehtar thrown in. If the fines were not paid, the culprit might be put to death either by the family or by the Mehtar. In these and in all similar exercises of authority the Mehtar was assisted by a Diwan-begi or Chief Minister, and by two or three *wazirs* or councillors, who were constantly in his company. There were usually also two *aksakals* (*lit.* white-beards) or elders in personal attendance upon him, and a number of chief men from outlying villages who visited the court in relays, and took turns of "waiting" upon the Mehtar.

A real and very efficient check upon any abuse (according to Chitralli standards) of the authority thus created was furnished by the publicity with which government and justice were alike adminis-

tered. Did the Mehtar dispose of wives, or confiscate property, or assess fines, or sentence to death, in any sort of secluded Star Chamber, the system could not endure. But all was done *coram populo* in open durbar, in the presence of the people, or of as many of them as chose to attend, and in the light of heaven. Chitral, in fact, had its Parliament and its democratic constitution. For, just as the British House of Commons is an assembly in which nominally all members take an equal part, but where in reality the two front benches to a large extent conduct the business, under the eyes and subject to the possible animadversion of the remainder, so in Chitral, the Mehtar, seated on a higher platform, and hedged about with a certain dignity, dispensed justice or law in sight of some hundreds of his subjects, who heard the arguments, watched the process of debate, and by their attitude in the main decided the issue. Such durbars were held on most days of the week in Chitral, very often twice in the day, in the morning and again at night. Justice compels me to add that the speeches were less long and the general demeanour more decorous than in some western assemblies.

Chitral consisted at the time of my visit of the fort and cluster of neighbouring hamlets on both banks of the river, with a population of about 1500 persons, that collectively bore the local name; the Chitral District, under the immediate control of the Mehtar, comprising the main valley of the Chitral river, with a population in its villages of some 10,000; and, finally, of the outlying valleys included within

the confines of the state. The name has been applied in this country, with insufficient distinction, to all three. The total revenue (the whole of which went into the hands of the Mehtar) was almost incapable of estimate, being largely paid in kind, but its main constituents were as follows: House-tax and land-tax, not assessed (for no land settlement had ever been made in Chitral), but roughly paid in contributions of *ghi*, *atta*, barley, firewood, etc., either to the Mehtar or to servants of the Mehtar, when on duty; octroi on caravans and trade; mineral resources, consisting of a little gold dust, of orpiment, and of lead; the timber monopoly, belonging to the Mehtar, and estimated at Rs.20,000 a year, the material consisting of deodar logs, cut down on the mountain-sides, tumbled into the river, and floated down with the floods; and the subsidy from the Indian and Kashmir Governments, which in 1894 was Rs.30,000. In former days an additional and lucrative source of revenue was the slave-trade, Chitrali girls having an exceptional reputation for beauty in the surrounding countries. The closing of the Kabul slave-market by Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, and the civilising agency of Russian advance towards and across the Pamirs, had already considerably reduced the extent and value of this traffic, when the British appeared upon the scene and finally put a stop to it, a sentence of absolute prohibition being the first sequel of the siege and subsequent *régime*.

When I rode away from Chitral in October 1894, Nizam-ul-Mulk accompanying me on horseback for

some distance, with a dear little boy, the youngest of his half-brothers, seated on his horse behind him and clinging around his waist, though my own good-bye to him was probably a final one (since one does not go twice in a lifetime, except on duty, to Chitral), no one could have anticipated his imminent doom. In the middle of December the annual subsidy from Kashmir and India reached Chitral, and the treasury was known to be full. On January 1 Nizam went out hawking with the sinister half-brother, Amir-ul-Mulk. He had dismounted, and was having his turban tied round his head by an attendant, when he was shot from behind at a signal from the traitor, and left to die, the rest of the party, with the murderer, galloping off to secure the fort and the treasure. There can be little doubt that the crime was planned in advance, and that Amir-ul-Mulk was acting in connivance with, although in reality the puppet of, his brother-in-law, Umra Khan.

Then ensued the fateful series of events culminating in the siege and defence, and finally in the relief of Chitral, which, during the months of February, March, and April of 1895, sent a thrill, first of apprehension, and later of pride and congratulation, throughout the British-speaking world. I shall not here recapitulate a story which found at the time accomplished and veracious chroniclers among its own heroes. The following were the leading episodes: On February 1 Sir G. Robertson, the British Resident at Gilgit, arrived at Chitral after a difficult but unopposed march across the mountains



in the dead of winter. On February 9 Umra Khan, who immediately upon the assassination of Nizam had advanced from the south, captured Kila Drosh, a Chitrali fort twenty-five miles south of Chitral. On February 20 Sher Afzul, the meteoric uncle, who had either escaped or been let loose from Kabul, reappeared upon the scene, and added to the dynastic and political complications. On March 1 Robertson retired into the fort with five other British officers, 99 Sikhs, over 300 Kashmiri Imperial Service troops, and a large number of servants, camp-followers, and Chitralis, making a total of some 550 persons. On March 14 an ultimatum was sent by the Indian Government to Umra Khan; a proclamation was made to the tribes, and the advance of a force of 14,000 men under Sir Robert Low was ordered from Peshawur. On March 23 Colonel Kelly, in command of the Northern Relief Column, 600 strong, started from Gilgit. On April 1 General Low's army crossed the frontier; on April 3 the Malakand was stormed; on April 7 the Swat River crossed; on April 12 a bridge was built over the Panjkora River, and on April 17 the Janbatai Pass was crossed. Meanwhile Kelly was advancing under circumstances of exceptional severity from the north. On April 9 he relieved Mastuj, which had been beleaguered for eighteen days; on April 13 occurred the fight at Nisa Gol, and on April 20 he reached Chitral. But meanwhile the news of the twofold advance had already produced its effect at that place. There for nearly seven weeks the garrison had endured with unbroken

spirit and amazing resource the perils and anxieties of a daily and nightly siege. On March 2 the murderer Amir-ul-Mulk was taken into custody, and his half-brother Shuja-ul-Mulk, whom I had met at Barnas, and who had been brought in by the British, was made provisional Mehtar. On March 3 took place the disastrous reconnaissance in which Captain Baird, with whom I rode down to Gilgit, lost his life, and the Dogra general and major were killed. On March 4 the siege began. On March 7 Sher Afzul arrived outside Chitral, and assumed the conduct of operations. On March 8 and 14 attempts were made to fire the water-tower. From March 16 to 23 there was a truce and unsuccessful negotiations. On March 29 a Union Jack, having been patched together in the fort, was hoisted on the south-west tower. On April 5 the enemy occupied the summer-house where I had lunched with Nizam, and commenced a series of attacks upon the gun-tower, as well as a subterranean mine. On April 11 there was a general attack upon the fort, which ended in failure. On April 17 Lieutenant Harley made his gallant sortie, blew up the mine, and killed sixty of the enemy. On April 18 a voice was heard shouting important news in the night: Sher Afzul and the Chitralis had fled, and the siege was raised. Even in this skeleton summary of events as they occurred, if it be studied in relation to the locality as already described in this chapter, ample evidence will be forthcoming of the magnitude of the peril endured and the glory of the triumph won. Chitral, whatever else may befall it, can never lose the place

it then gained in the records of Indian bravery and British heroism.

From Chitral Fort Younghusband and I rode back to Gilgit, a distance by the route that we followed of somewhat over 200 miles. Here I need only record one or two incidents of that journey. We crossed the watershed between the Yarkhun and the Ghizar Valley by the Shandur Pass (13,500 feet). A *dak* had come in while we were at Mastuj, and had brought with it a copy of my book, *Problems of the Far East*, which had appeared in England since my departure, and which I had not before seen in its published guise. With it came a stout bundle of newspaper reviews ; and any author can sympathise with my emotions of pleasure as, with the reins thrown on the neck of my horse, I rode up the steep and stony ascent that leads to the pass, reading the too favourable notices of my book, and stuffing them into my holsters as I proceeded.

At a distance of about 70 miles from Mastuj we came to the junction of the Yasin with the Ghizar river, and a little below this saw the then new fort of Gupis, built of stone and mud by the Kashmir Imperial Service Troops. As we arrived the British officer in command rode out to greet me and offered us the modest hospitality of the fort. This was a Captain Townshend, who was subsequently to attain fame as the defender of Kut in the Mesopotamian campaign of the Great War. In his company I visited the lines inside the fort, the keep, containing the officers' quarters, the dispensary, hospital, school, stores, and magazine ; and I saw a brass

six-pounder, which had once done service in the Abyssinian campaign, fired from the roof of the gun-tower at a range of 900 yards. A Union Jack had just arrived and been hoisted, and was for the first time fluttering merrily in the breeze. As for the men, of whom there were 250 in the fort, half Dogras and half Gurkhas, and who went through manual and bayonet exercise for my inspection, they were the smartest of any of the Kashmiri troops whom I had encountered on the frontier. The Dogra colonel and major took me down the ranks, and the men were given a holiday in honour of the visit of a British Member of Parliament, an individual whose identity was probably to them a complete conundrum.

Even more vividly, however, than the inspection of the garrison do I remember the night spent with my somewhat unusual host. He combined with an absorbing interest in military science and an equal familiarity with the writings of Hamley and Clausewitz, and the strategy of Hannibal, Marlborough, and the Emperor Napoleon, an interest in the gayer side of existence, of which Paris was to him the hub and symbol. On the walls of his mud dwelling were pinned somewhat daring coloured illustrations from Parisian journals of the lighter type ; and he regaled us through a long evening with French songs to the accompaniment of a banjo.

Through the little state of Punial I was accompanied by the Raja, Akbar Khan, a big-lipped, fat, and comfortable-looking personage, who had been to India and who discoursed to me about the history

of his state, from the chiefship of which he had at a later date to be removed. Riding with me through a chill and savage gorge, he spied upon the opposite cliff a herd of markhor, whereupon he announced his intention of slaying one of their number with a Martini carbine which he carried. I showed some incredulity, as the distance across the ravine was at least 400 yards ; but the old Raja dismounted, took a long aim, and fired, with the unquestionable result that one of the markhor fell. I have no doubt that he "browed" the lot, and made a lucky hit ; but he was overjoyed at his prowess, with which I had luckily abstained from competing. The track over the *paris* in the Gakuch and Punial districts was formerly of the most villainous description, the descent of one very steep place being only accomplished by the aid of a sort of fixed pole with projections, very much like the pole in the bear's den in the Zoological Gardens. But the Kashmir sappers had recently been hard at work, and I have no doubt that there is now something more worthy of the name of a road.

Raja Akbar Khan's residence was at Cher (or Sher) Kila, *i.e.* Rock Fort, a village and fort with a good many fruit trees, situated upon a large alluvial fan on the left bank of the river. The fort was a large quadrangular structure, with many towers and bastions, on the water's edge, one side of it being built on a cliff that rose sharply from the river. Here was a very long rope bridge, 340 feet in length. Though it was in excellent repair, I confess I was rather glad that I was not called upon to cross it.

The Raja told me that a few years before it had snapped with fourteen men upon it, all of whom had been swept away and had perished. On the tenth morning after leaving Chitral, I rode back again into civilisation at Gilgit. There I heard that the Tsar was dying, and that the Amir of Afghanistan, whom I hoped to visit, was lying dangerously ill at Kabul. At the same time, though I did not know it, it was being announced in the English newspapers that I had disappeared from view, and that the gravest doubts were entertained as to my safety.

Here my readers may perhaps ask what became of the little country of Chitral when the storms of warfare that burst upon it in 1895 had subsided and peace was restored. It is a tale from which I may extract a certain amount of modest satisfaction, since I staked much upon a solution which was denounced and derided by the Pacifist school at the time, but which has since been attended with unbroken success. After my return to England early in 1895, there ensued a correspondence in the *Times* newspaper, between the months of March and June 1895, in which I fought the battle of the retention of Chitral against the combined forces of General Sir John Adye, Sir James Lyall (ex-Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab), Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain, and the first Lord Chelmsford. I urged that we should not abandon our position in Chitral; that we should appoint a Political Officer to the state; and above all that we should keep open the road from the South; thereby reducing our line of communication with British India from 700

to less than 300 miles. The Retreatists would not have these proposals at any price. Such a policy, they said, would involve a ruinous outlay, an immense garrison, and the eternal and implacable hostility of the tribes. Sir N. Chamberlain in particular wrote :

If we remain in Chitral, Bajaur, and Swat, the tribesmen will only be kept quiet by our retaining at a great annual cost a sufficient force in the Valley to overawe them. Reduce or withdraw that force and they will rise again. No British force or British Agent can be in those valleys with the good will of the great mass of the people. . . . Mr. Curzon's policy is bound to lead to further annexation with a largely increased expenditure as assuredly as the night follows the day.

These views had prevailed with the Liberal Secretary of State, Sir Henry Fowler (afterwards Lord Wolverhampton), and with Lord Rosebery's Government when, in a fortunate hour, that Government fell, in the summer of 1895, and was succeeded by a Ministry of which Lord Salisbury was the chief.

At his request I wrote a Minute for the Cabinet, of which I may quote the concluding paragraph :

The road from Peshawur has already been half constructed during the recent campaign. Why should not an effort be made, by placing detachments at fixed distances upon it (if necessary), and by subsidising the tribes, to keep it open ? No one can say that it will be a failure until the experiment has been tried. There is no need for permanent military occupation or annexation, nor for interference with native customs or administration. The roads

along the entire Gilgit frontier are already so maintained and policed. The same prevails in the mountain border between the Indus and Afghanistan. Local levies can be raised, as in Beluchistan and Hunza, from the tribes themselves. They will make excellent soldiers, and will gladly serve for an assured pay. What the poorer classes fear and dislike is the *corrée*, and being obliged to carry loads as coolies. If they are secured from these burdens they will soon acquiesce in the new condition ; *vide* the former and present state of the Gilgit road. As regards Chitral itself, it is the corollary of this argument that, while not interfering (any more than we did before) with native institutions or customs, a British Political Officer should still be maintained at or near to Chitral itself, with an escort adequate to secure his safety ; and that British suzerainty should continue to be paramount along the entire Hindu Kush frontier. For a time more men may be required, and greater expense may be incurred than hitherto in the setting up of this new order. Later on the tension will be relaxed, and reduction will be possible. In any case even increased outlay will be a cheap insurance against the future troubles and expenditure that present evacuation will some day involve.

These arguments were accepted by the Cabinet. The young Mehtar was confirmed on the *gadi* ; Chitral was detached from the Gilgit Agency ; Captain Gurdon, a very capable young officer, was appointed Political Officer ; and it was decided to complete and keep open the southern road. The siege having demonstrated what was already obvious, viz. that the old Chitral Fort was planted in the very worst position for military defence, it was handed back as a residence to the Mehtar, while the British Political Officer and his escort were stationed in a



new fort, built at a slight distance on a more defensible site. Such was the success of these arrangements that, during the serious outbreak that set the entire Indian frontier ablaze from Swat to Samana in the autumn of 1897, uninterrupted tranquillity prevailed in Chitral. In the ensuing year I became Viceroy, and had the pleasure of carrying to completion the arrangements which I had foreshadowed four years before. Refusing the proposal of the military authorities for a large fort at Chitral, I provided for a small garrison at Drosh, at the southern end of the valley, made a telegraph line to Chitral, and started the formation of the corps of native levies or scouts which I had advocated. The British garrison was reduced to one Indian battalion, and the yearly reliefs were carried out during my term of office, 1899-1905, without the firing of a single shot. The young Mehtar proved to be a loyal and capable ruler, and, along with his brother chieftains of the Hindu Kush border, subsequently paid me a visit at Calcutta.

After I had left India, this happy condition of affairs continued, and has never since been disturbed. Chitral is now under the North-west Frontier Province, which I was instrumental in creating, and a single Political Officer, under the Chief Commissioner, acts for the three states of Dir, Swat, and Chitral, whose inhabitants according to Sir Neville Chamberlain ought to be in a state of chronic and embittered revolt. When the war with Afghanistan broke out in 1919 and the rest of the Frontier Militia broke, and when the Afghans actually

invaded Chitral, the little state and its ruler stood firm as a rock. So peaceful is the scene that the Chitral garrison, with the exception of a single Indian company, is concentrated entirely at Drosh; the relays take place biennially without a hitch, and the Chitrali Scouts, service in which is exceedingly popular, have now (1925) reached a total of nearly 1000 men, with 2 British officers.

Reading over this chapter, as I have written it, I hope I have not indulged in too great detail. If I have it has been not without some purpose. For I have sought to draw an accurate picture of a small patch of the world's surface, almost unknown except to a few Indian politicals or Indian soldiers, of a people who, embedded in this remote and ancient ethnological stratum, have retained an individuality of their own for centuries; of events in the history of those parts which, though now wellnigh forgotten, made a great and resounding reverberation at the time; and of a political problem which, for more than a century, has been enacted and re-enacted on the Indian stage as the pressure of internal forces, or the fear of aggression from without, has driven the ploughshare of the Indian Government through the stony furrows of the border mountains right up to the outer pale of the British protectorate. Chitral is, in my view, an illustration of how that problem, by the exercise of some initial firmness and by wise administration afterwards, may be satisfactorily solved. Just as a small stone cast into the water may produce a big ripple, that widens out into larger and larger circles before the commotion dies, so it came

about that little Chitral for a short space shook the quiet of the great world and will have its place in the history of the Asiatic continent, while, now that it has again relapsed into obscurity, it remains both a lesson and a type.

## ON THE INDIAN FRONTIER



# I

## KASHMIR TO GILGIT

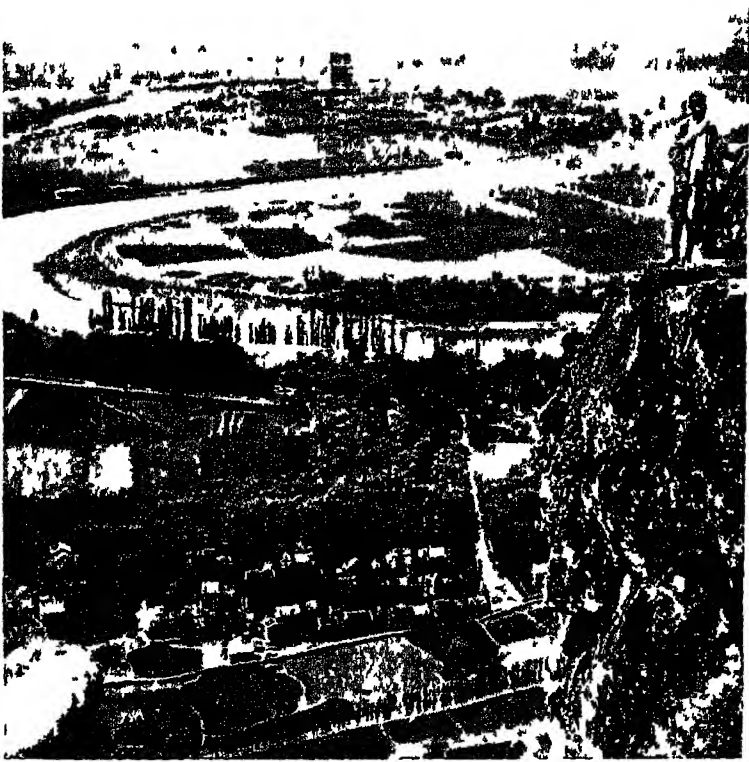
We, we have chosen our path—  
Path to a clear-purposed goal,  
Path of advance!—but it leads,  
A long, steep journey, through sunk  
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Rugby Chapel.*

As the traveller leaves the plains of India, and, ascending the lower foot-slopes of the Himalayas, looks back upon the country he has left, and as from his ever-increasing altitude the rich landscape widens to a vast horizon, until at length it resembles an embroidered scarf hung up against the sky, he can appreciate the fascination which those verdant plains, that fair and almost illimitable expanse, with its teeming population, its great cities, its agricultural wealth, its capacities for luxury and ease, must have exercised upon the hardier and more penurious peoples of the north, when, bursting through their mountain barriers on the tide of rapine or conquest, they first caught sight of that enchanted vision and pressed forward to so desirable a goal. Such were the emotions of Timur and Baber, of Mahmud of Ghuzni and of Nadir Shah. Such must have been the feelings of an earlier and a greater conqueror,

Alexander of Macedon. It is with sensations not essentially dissimilar that Hindustan is still regarded by the races whose habitat is confined to northern latitudes and less favoured climes. As, in their forward march across the sandy steppes of Central Asia, these have found themselves arrested by the turbulent ferocity of the Afghans or by the snows and glaciers of the Pamirs, adventurous spirits among them have not unnaturally projected their gaze across the intervening barriers to the sunny regions which a superior fortune has conferred upon Great Britain, and which have always carried with them the dominion of the East. Hence it is that, in no spirit of challenge or provocation, but in deference to the imperious necessities of self-defence, the Indian Government has for more than three-quarters of a century been obliged, as the gap between the advancing frontiers has steadily narrowed, to look with such anxious concern to its north-western border, and to provide by every means that military science or political statecraft can suggest against the possibility of invasion or attack.

Among the territories that lie between the inner and outer mountain barriers of Hindustan, none has been more qualified to excite a conqueror's desire, and none in the amplitude of its beauty and resources affords a sharper contrast to the severe and sterile region by which it is bounded, than the Vale of Kashmir. When the traveller from the declivities of either the northern or the southern hills beholds it outspread at his feet—100 miles of agricultural fatness and wealth—he grasps the appositeness of the



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THE VALLEY OF KASHMIR





designation, the Happy Valley. "It lies deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns and bowery hollows." Already from hearsay or reading the principal landmarks are familiar to his view. He sees the shining expanse of the Wular Lake lying at the base of the hills that conceal the zigzags of the Gilgit road. Into it on the one side flow the sluggish coils of the Jhelum river, brown with the dirt and drainage of Srinagar. Emerging on the other side, they again meander over the plain until the sliding loops are contracted and tortured into foam as they enter the Baramula gorge, and commence their roaring descent to the distant Indus. Away to the south-east in the centre of the plain, though nearer to the base of the northern hills, rise the twin elevations of the Hari Parbat, crowned with the Emperor Akbar's fort, and the Takht-i-Suleiman, or Solomon's Throne, culminating in the ruins of an ancient temple. Between the two, the traveller knows that Srinagar, the City of the Sun, lines both banks of the twisting stream. These are the main interior landmarks. The surface of the plain is carpeted with the green of rice crops and maize, and with scattered clumps of timber. Its successive levels, or *karewas*, as the natural terraces are called, indicate the bed of the lake with which the entire basin was once filled. Over their surface the water is conducted in tiny channels from streams that furrow a stony track from the mountains.

The framework of this idyllic scene is supplied by a panorama of heights as noble as any in the world. The lower spurs are wooded up to an elevation of

from 8000 feet to 10,000 feet with the deodar or Himalayan cedar, with English timber, and with various pines. Then comes a bleaker zone of scant herbage and stones, frequently veiled in mist wreaths or drowned in lakes of ærial foam. Above and beyond rise the white eternal crests of the Himalayan peaks ; Haramuk, with his soaring dome, and Nanga Parbat, one of the most beautiful of mountains, with a jagged edge that appears to pierce the zenith. In this Elysian valley English flowers and fruits abound, English ladies move to and fro without escort, English children bloom. In the surrounding gorges and ravines young English officers find a yearly training-ground for their muscles and a grateful vacation from duty in the pursuit of wild deer, ibex, and goat ; and the "race for the *nullahs*" which ensues, as soon as the season of leave commences, is a tribute at once to the emulation of the sportsman and the hospitality of the state.

A metropolitan city affords no inadequate criterion of the customs and aptitudes, of the religious feeling and social conditions, of the inhabitants of a state. In its palaces we see the splendour or insignificance of its sovereigns ; in its temples is displayed the dominion or the decay of religion ; in its shops and bazaars we may appraise the extent and quality of its commerce ; in its private habitations, from the mansion of the nobleman or merchant to the coolie's hut of mud or reeds, we may bridge the interval between the comfort that springs from aristocratic birth or official dignity or successful trade, and the squalor that is the immemorial portion of the



NANGA PARBAT



Asiatic peasant and artisan. Srinagar is rich in the grounds for such an induction. Let me say at once that the city, picturesque, and even romantic as in some respect it is, appeared to me, as I saw it more than thirty years ago, to have been altogether extravagantly praised. Being situated on both banks of a river, from which diverge a certain number of canals, it has sometimes been compared to Bangkok, the capital of Siam, while both cities have been compared to Venice. Srinagar was about as much like Bangkok, and both were as much like Venice, as a hansom cab is like a gondola. Srinagar was essentially tumbledown, slatternly, ignoble, unregenerate. It had in it nothing of the grandiose, or even imposing. Its colour was a uniform and dirty drab ; its picturesqueness was that of decrepitude ; its romance, if any, was that of decay.

Imagine a river from 90 to 150 yards in normal width, with banks from 15 to 30 feet in height, which for over two miles of its serpentine course is fringed on either side by an irregular line of two- or even three-storeyed buildings. Nearly all these buildings are of a crude, dust-coloured brick, held together by layers of mud. Many of them are in a state of extreme dilapidation ; though a certain comeliness is lent to the more pretentious by the balconies and lattices of pierced woodwork that overlook the stream. They are precariously saved from the ravages of the floods, either by being elevated upon long wooden piles or upon a crumbling masonry embankment, among whose stones may be seen embedded the capitals and cornices of ancient Hindu

temples—a significant testimony to the indifference with which successive dynasties in Kashmir have treated the cult of their predecessors, and which finds an additional illustration in the contrast between the ancient mosques, attesting the religion of the majority of the people, and the Hindu temples with pyramidal cupolas coated over with tin plates (mostly the sides of broken-up oil-cans) that reflect the pagan zeal of the Dogras or ruling race.

In spite of the precautions above alluded to, the Jhelum is apt to rise above the embankment and the piles, and to assail the rickety structures on their summit. In 1893 the flood, which was the biggest known for fifty years, had inundated the European quarter known as the Munshi Bagh, stood several feet deep in the ground-floor of the houses, and swept clean away six of the seven wooden bridges that spanned the stream. They were afterwards restored on the former model, which was said to have an antiquity of 400 years. It is well adapted both to the æsthetic and to the more material aspects of Srinagar. A wooden platform with hand-rail is laid upon three immense stacks or piers in the bed of the stream, which have the appearance of scaffoldings from a distance, but in reality consist of a super-structure of deodar logs laid roughly across each other upon a foundation of piles, and packed with loose stones. In former days there were rows of shops on the top of two at least of the bridges, as upon old London Bridge, and upon the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. But on the newer fabrics these had disappeared. Between the piers the fish leap



*Topical Press Agency.*

SRINAGAR





from the muddy water, and boatmen are constantly letting down and drawing up immense nets. One of the features of the river is the number of wooden bathing-boxes or platforms that are moored near to the sides for the ablutions either of daily life or of religious observance.

This chapter is not intended to be a guide-book of Srinagar, and therefore I will say nothing about the mosques or public buildings, the palaces or bazaars, of the town. It is better indeed and fairer to Srinagar not to leave its aquatic highway at all, for there is concentrated whatever it possesses of individuality or charm. Out of a total population estimated in 1894 at 132,000, some 10,000 had their habitation on the river. Thereon might be seen the several varieties of Kashmir boat—the *bahat*, a big grain barge, slowly propelled by poles; the *dunga*, or ordinary passenger boat, which was used both for residence and for journeys, and which had a sloping roof of mats or reeds; the *shikara*, or light craft, the Srinagar equivalent to the caique of Stamboul, which was swiftly urged along by boatmen wielding heart-shaped paddles of wood; and the *parinda*, or ceremonial barge, where the occupant sits beneath a canopy near the bows, while behind him thirty or forty men sitting in two rows drive the boat with frantic energy through the water. European taste had been responsible for the recent introduction of house-boats, built very much upon the lines of an Oxford College Barge. Herein many of the foreign residents lived permanently, the interior being decorated by Kashmiri workmen with elegant panelling,

and supplied with all the comforts of an exotic civilisation.

The environs of the city are beautified by magnificent clumps of *chenar*, the Oriental plane. Among the many contributions of the Moghul emperors of Agra and Delhi to the embellishment of the Kashmir capital, which was their favourite summer retreat, for none have later generations more reasons to be grateful than for the artistic forethought which originated in so many places, avenues, or groves of these stately trees, and which even imposed upon the native villages as a yearly duty the plantation of a stipulated number. Later dynasties have responded by an almost equally abundant introduction of poplars, and the long lines and avenues of the latter are among the delights of suburban Srinagar.

No visitor goes away without diverging from the river by one of the lateral canals and spending a morning in his boat in furrowing the glassy surface of the Dal Lake, immediately behind the city, and in inspecting the pleasure gardens and pavilions around its shores that were erected for the diversion or the dalliance of the Moghul sovereigns. The floating gardens of the lake are famous ; great lotus leaves and water-lilies quiver idly upon the pellucid surface ; wild-fowl of every description dart in and out of the rushes, and kingfishers flash like streaks of blue flame amid the trees. Perhaps our destination is the Nasim Bagh, or Garden of Soft Breezes, or the Nishat Bagh, or Garden of Bliss, or the Shalamar Bagh—the two latter the creation of the Emperor Jehangir more than three centuries gone by.

There the water still descends from terrace to terrace and ripples in deftly constructed cascades ; it still spurts from the Moghul fountains, and splashes in the decaying and deserted pools. The gardens, once so trim and neat, though little tended, are still bright with flowers. In the pavilions that are built above the waters one may lie at ease on the very spot where the emperors and their sultanas played and quarrelled and were reconciled. The eye wanders over the terraces and cascades and pools, and across the blue levels of the lake, to where the Takht-i-Suleiman and the Hari Parbat, like two grim sentinels, keep watch at the gates of the invisible city at their feet, and at such a moment, and from this agreeable distance, the beauty of Srinagar becomes crystallised into a positive sensation.

To the traveller, however, and in a scarcely less degree to the sportsman, Srinagar is only the gateway to regions possessing an even more potent fascination beyond. The young subaltern halts there on his way to shoot ibex or markhor in the *nullahs* of the Hindu Kush or amid the crags of Baltistan. The explorer or the voyager takes it in his stride on the march to Gilgit, or the Pamirs. It was as a member of the second class that in 1904 I passed through on my way to the outer frontier of the Indian Empire. I afterwards wrote a book about the latter, which though it was already in print and had been sold for a substantial sum to an enterprising publisher, I was never allowed to bring out ; for, when I had actually corrected the final proofs and my photographs had been engraved, I was

appointed Viceroy of India ; and the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, declared with, I believe, a quite unnecessary punctilio, that a new Viceroy ought not to publish anything about the country which he was so soon to rule. So my plates were put away, the cheque was returned, and my proof sheets reposed, as they have done ever since, in a tin box from which they will now never emerge—not indeed from any pedantry or spleen, but because I find them to be superfluous and out of date. The Pamir Question has been settled, at any rate for the time being ; the majority of the little mountain republics have not the political interest or strategical importance that they once possessed ; and what was then all but virgin ground has since been frequently trodden and described. Here I will only give a slight sketch of the region in question, in its relation to the frontier problem as a whole.

The frontier pass of Gilgit is situated 230 miles north of Srinagar, and is separated from it by the main Himalayan range. A glance at the map will indicate the importance which, owing to its geographical situation, the place has always possessed in the military and dynastic contests of the Hindu Kush region. Planted on a fertile oasis, at a slight distance above the junction of the Hunza River—which runs down through the valley of that name from the watershed separating India from the Eastern Pamirs—and the Gilgit River, which flows in from the borders of Chitral on the west, receiving in its course tributaries from Yasin and Ishkumman, it has always been the point from which connection



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SHER KHTA VILLAGE - GHIGLI RIVER



FERRY BOAT AT GUMAT VILLAGE - GHIGLI RIVER



with or control over the neighbouring states south of the great ranges could most effectively be maintained; while its position in relation to the main valley of the Indus, into which the Gilgit River flows thirty miles lower down, rendered it the northern key of that mysterious mountain fastness, variously known as the Kohistan or Highlands, and Yaghistan or Outlawland, where for hundreds of years, either in the main valley of the Indus or in the lateral ravines, lawless and savage communities have retained, and still retain, an independent existence, a scourge to each other and a terror to their neighbours. Thus Gilgit, from its central position, has always been of great importance for controlling the tribes of the north, and for coercing and keeping in check the tribes of the south.

At one time ruled by a Hindu dynasty that united under its sway the petty neighbouring states from Hunza to Gurais, and from Chilas to Chitral, in later days it became the sport of warring tribes, being alternately conquered and held by Punial, Nagar, and Yasin. At length, some eighty years ago, it was taken by the Sikhs, and in 1846 passed, with the remainder of the splendid heritage that we so lightly bartered to Golab Singh, into the hands of the Dogra chief. Since then Gilgit has been taken and lost and retaken, but has for the most part remained in the hands of Kashmir. The price, however, that required to be paid for the all but barren glory of possession was ruinous both in money and men. A garrison, at one time amounting to 6000 men, was maintained by the Maharaja's



Government in the neighbourhood; ill looked after, undisciplined and unpaid, they abominated their service, and deserted when they could. The *begar* or *corvée* that was enforced, both to fill their ranks and to supply them with provisions, decimated the mountain peoples and entailed fearful misery and oppression. The villages along the line of route from Kashmir were abandoned by their inhabitants, who either fled into the hills or paid extravagant sums in blackmail to escape from the military inquisition. Those who were successfully impressed received no mercy at the hands of their captors, but were driven like beasts of burden under their loads, and when worn out were brutally left to perish by the way. At the end of the time the Gilgit garrison profited little by these exactions, for, owing to the universal embezzlement in high places, but few of the supplies contracted for reached their destination; and the Dogra troops were in almost as much danger from starvation as they were from the assaults of an exasperated foe. Though maintaining a titular Raja, connected with the old ruling family, the Kashmir Government nominated a governor to Gilgit in addition to the general commanding the forces; and as late as 1885 the annual charge on the Kashmir treasury for maintaining this isolated post alone amounted to £7000.

It was a fortunate day when the misgovernment of the Kashmir State and contemporary events in Central Asia compelled the Indian Government to look more closely into and eventually to make itself responsible for the border defences of Kashmir.

In 1878 the first British Agent or Political Officer was appointed to reside at Gilgit. In one of the customary waves of political reaction he was presently withdrawn. But the intrigues of Russia, then in her most Chauvinistic temper, on and beyond the outer frontier, compelled the Indian Government to reconsider its decision, and the post was revived and made permanent in 1889. Simultaneously the duty of providing the frontier garrisons was withdrawn from the Kashmir Durbar, and was entrusted to the newly constituted Kashmir Imperial Service troops, commanded by British officers, in whose hands it has ever since remained. Thus it was that, almost unwittingly to start with—as is the way with British Governments—but not too soon, Great Britain made herself accountable for the adequate defence of what are the natural boundaries, not of a feudatory state, but of the Indian Empire itself, and assumed a task which has ever since been invested not with a local, but with an imperial significance.

The country between the Kashmir Valley and Gilgit consists of an intricate maze of mountains, seldom presenting a mile of level ground, and requiring to be crossed by passes, the highest of which is 13,450 feet above the sea. In former days the road that connected the two places was only a mountain track, precariously skirting immense precipices and threading profound ravines. Its defects of construction caused appalling loss of life, both to baggage animals and to men. The first desideratum of effective and economic defence was therefore the

provision of a proper military road. The work was begun in 1890 and completed two years later, being interrupted and severely strained by the Hunza-Nagar campaign of the winter of 1891.

At the time of my visit, less than three years later, the number of British and Kashmir troops stationed on the frontier was still over 3000 men—a total long since reduced to an almost insignificant quota—and the entire food-supply for this considerable force during the winter had to be conveyed across the mountain passes before these were blocked by snow. Communication by baggage animals was then liable to be suspended for over seven months, so that the entire work of the year must be accomplished in the remaining four to five, the dates between which the passes were regarded as really passable being from July 1 to October 10. For this work there were being employed in the autumn of 1894 no fewer than 15,000 animals—7500 ponies, 6700 bullocks, 250 mules, 250 donkeys, and 800 camels, supplied by Pathan tribesmen, mostly Mohmand refugees.

My own journey on pony back to Gilgit was made in nine days; but this was due to special facilities in the provision of relays, the demands upon all available resources being so severe that, except with special permission, which was then rarely given, no private travellers were allowed by the Indian Government to proceed upon the military road. The camp-following with which I went up, and which included four Europeans, consisted of twenty-six animals and thirty-five men. We slept in tents or in bungalows, a certain number of the latter having been erected

for the accommodation of travellers along the road, consisting of a building with rough stone walls, divided into two compartments, but containing so far neither furniture, flooring, nor, in some cases, doors. The regularity and comparative absence of friction with which this laborious system of transport operated in a country singularly poor in supplies, and in face of the most capricious vicissitudes of nature, reflected the greatest credit upon the officers engaged. To the inhabitants of the localities traversed the certainty of paid employment and of a fair wage came as a pleasant relief from the horrors of the old *corvée* ; while the villages north of Astor and in the Indus Valley for the first time tasted security from the raids of the dreaded freebooters of Chilas. The agricultural resources of the surrounding districts had been heavily taxed for the provision of supplies, and husbandry had been compelled to yield to the superior necessities of transport. But, as time passed by, matters had righted themselves, and the diminution in the strain had removed the temporary deterrent to cultivation.

I need not describe the stages of this journey, for which my readers may be referred to the accounts in the excellent books of Mr. E. F. Knight<sup>1</sup> and Sir M. Conway,<sup>2</sup> and to later publications ; but I may, in passing, sum up the more general impressions. As regards the scenery of the road, its main characteristic is the almost total absence of horizontal lines. The track itself winds up and down, now along the

<sup>1</sup> *Where Three Empires Meet*, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> *Climbing and Exploration in the Karakoram Himalayas*, 1894.

roaring bed of a snow-grey torrent, anon 2000 feet above the yellow riband that hums faintly in the deep gorge below. It scales with mathematical zigzags precipices upon which the foot of man could not otherwise rest. Again it plunges into the shade of Alpine pine forests, or follows the sterile sinuations of sombre ravines. I can only recall one level valley-bottom in the entire journey, and that, at Gurais, is the bed of an ancient lake. The nearest mountains, with their stony buttresses and forbidding peaks, as a rule shut out the snowy giants behind ; but here and there through gaps, or at the head of lateral *nullahs*, glimpses are caught of summits more than 20,000 feet high ;<sup>1</sup> while from the passes is obtained in fine weather a superb retrospect towards the Kashmir Valley (the white clouds resting in the hollows like cotton-wool), or a bewildering outlook over the tumult of Himalayan peaks. Nanga Parbat, 26,620 feet, is the monarch among the loftier summits, and the sight of his imperial form, as seen from the Indus Valley at Bunji—a sheer 22,000 feet in height from the spectator's level to his topmost crown—is one of the glories of Kashmir.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, however, I found the scenery of the roads more impressive than beautiful, more sullen than joyous, more rugged than picturesque. It may

<sup>1</sup> By far the most remarkable of these is the isolated Dichel Peak, closely resembling the Matterhorn in form and outline, as seen on approaching Astor, and again after leaving Dashkin.

<sup>2</sup> It was on this great mountain that the well-known Alpine climber, Mr. A. Mummery, lost his life, it is supposed from an avalanche, in August 1895.

be divided into three sections. The first is that from Bandipur to Minimerg, a distance of sixty miles. This is the prettiest part of the journey, for the track winds through Alpine pine woods and skirts romantic glens. It contains, however, one pass, the Tragbal or Rajdiangan, 11,800 feet high, which is greatly feared in winter because of its long, bald summit, across which the snow-laden gales shriek their accents of death to animal and man. A loftier and more famous, or infamous, pass occurs in the second section, which is relatively treeless and barren, and which stretches (with certain agreeable interludes) for ninety miles from Minimerg to the Indus at Ramghat. This is the Burzil, which I crossed as early as the first week of September in a snowstorm, with the thermometer at only one degree above freezing-point; and the height of which I registered by boiling-point thermometer and aneroid as 13,450 feet. Countless are the tales which actual suffering no less than superstitious horror has associated with the five or six miles of barren *couloir*, culminating in a desolate plateau, in which are concentrated the main dangers of the pass. Here I was shown a rock under which five men crouched to eat their supper, and were found frozen to death in the morning. There some similar casualty occurred. In October 1891 over a hundred men of a British Indian regiment, marching up to Gilgit for the campaign, had been frost-bitten in a single night, and some had died. One of our men assured us that he had been present when a coolie, walking the hindmost in a string, was forcibly seized and thrown into

a neighbouring gully by a monstrous *jin* or demon as tall as from the earth to the sky, and covered with hair over a foot long. In this repellent and treeless region, heaps of detritus, loosened by the snow, continually slide down the rocky slopes, and mud avalanches, carrying boulders as large as cottages, creep down the side ravines. The cultivated terraces and orchards of Astor, where were stationed 800 men of a Sikh regiment (destined, at no distant date, to form a portion of Colonel Kelly's famous relief expedition to Chitral), supply a welcome oasis of verdure and comfort in the midst of the surrounding desolation. A wooden hand-rail around a modest grave there marks the last resting-place of one of the most promising among the gallant young batch of English officers whom frontier warfare or exploration in India had shown in recent years to possess the same stubborn grit as of old. This was Lieutenant Davison, who was arrested by the Russians at the same time as Captain Younghusband on the Pamirs in 1891, and expelled by them from non-Russian territory. In 1893 he died of dysentery near Astor.

In descending the Hatu Pir to Ramghat, a new vision was disclosed of a new landscape, opening the eye the last section of our march through the valleys of the Indus and its confluent the Gilgit River. It was certainly a strange, and even impressive spectacle. Mountains brown and grey and blue and purple, according to the perspective in which they were seen or to the light that fell upon them, but uniformly devoid of the faintest speck of verdure.

descend to the Tartarean trough in which the Indus rolls its turbid and inky volume towards the remote Indian plains. Its valley is here composed of shingle slopes and boulder-strewn wastes and minutely pulverised sand, the sand and stones refracting with merciless ferocity the unfeeling glare of the sun. The ride to Gilgit was unredeemed by any solace save that which was afforded by the small oasis of Bunji and the hospitality of the little knot of British officers there collected, to the entertainment offered by whom I have paid tribute in my former volume; and it was with sensations of profound relief that the traveller saw outstretched before him the richer and greener slopes of Minawar and Gilgit, where a more abundant verdure is extracted from the mountain detritus spread out in the geological formation known as an alluvial fan.

Throughout the journey a practical reminder of civilisation was furnished by the telegraph wire, constructed partly by the Indian, partly by the Kashmir Government, but entirely maintained, on imperial grounds, by the former. It ran in close proximity to the military road. Whole slices of forest had required to be cut down to safeguard the wire from falling timber in winter, and the hardships to which the snowed-up telegraph clerks, who then looked after the maintenance of communications, were exposed were not the least disagreeable of its resultant obligations. As soon as the snow began to fall and the winter set in, they were cut off from all connection, except such as the wire could give, with the outer world. Indoors their lives might be



sufficiently comfortable, even if monotonous. But the moment they learned, by the periodical testing of the wires, that an interruption had taken place, out they must sally, at all hazards and in all weathers, from the two stations on either side of the fault, to repair the fracture. This, as a rule, would have resulted from one of the many avalanches that, at nearly all seasons, but most of all in winter, come leaping down the mountain-sides in platoons, and almost in squadrons, and that might be as dangerous to the repair-party as they had previously proved to be to the poles and wires. The instances were not rare of risks run and acts of heroism performed by the telegraph clerks and their native linemen on this isolated strand of Great Britain's world-embracing cable of Empire, as great as any of those recorded on the battlefield or at the cannon's mouth.

The character of the scattered native villages passed *en route* is adapted to the same climatic conditions. They consist of small clusters of log-huts, built of roughly hewn pine logs laid transversely upon each other and packed with mud and stones. A small door, some two feet in height, about half-way up the side, indicates the level at which the snow is wont to lie. A square hole in the flat mud roof affords the sole passage for either light to enter or smoke to issue. At Gurais, Astor, and other places are native forts, crazy structures of mud and stones, loopholed for musketry, and sometimes containing an elevated bastion with embrasures for a gun. They no doubt served their purpose as a place

THE HUNGARIAN WIRE THROUGH KASHMIR

By V. J. L. C.





of refuge from the raids of ill-armed highland clans, and are sometimes planted in situations of natural strength. They could, however, almost invariably be shelled from neighbouring heights, and a few well-directed shots would probably knock the ramshackle old relics to pieces.

South of the Burzil the people appeared to belong to the same race as in the Kashmir plain ; but northward we encountered a new type, of which we afterwards met with numerous specimens as we proceeded to Astor and Gilgit and passed on to Hunza and Nagar. These belong to the race to whom, for convenience sake, the name Dard, which they do not themselves either know or acknowledge,<sup>1</sup> has been applied ; and who, though speaking different languages and emanating from different stocks, illustrate, with greater or less uniformity, a primitive Aryan type. A cloth cap upon the head, rolled up to form a sort of brim, and a brown *choga*, or loose woollen dressing-gown, woven by themselves, are the differentiating articles of costume. Strong, clearly marked features, black curling locks, sometimes varied by chestnut hair and blue eyes, and a masculine bearing are the salient characteristics of external appearance. Hardy mountaineers they are, and such also is their deportment. Polo is the national pastime of these highland tribes, and several polo grounds are passed upon the march. I have

<sup>1</sup> There was said to be a solitary exception in the case of the inhabitants of the Guraïs Valley, who acknowledge the name Dard, and speak a dialect of Shina (so different from Kashmiri that men of the two races cannot understand each other) analogous to the language spoken in Chillas, Kane, and Dras.

said something about the Hindu Kush variety of the game in another chapter. Very little animal life was visible from the road. Carrion crows, a few vultures, pigeons, and occasional *chikor* (the counterpart of the red-legged partridge) were seen. No big game showed itself; but between Doian and Bunji, and again between Bunji and Gilgit, open out the famous *nullahs*, where markhor, and ibex, and oorial abound; and there was not an officer then ordered to Gilgit who did not feel the penance of exile assuaged in advance by the anticipation of *shikar* in those once prolific but now, I fear, depleted ravines. The measurement of horns had assumed a scientific exactitude, and woe betide the luckless sportsman who, with a too hasty or ignorant rifle, infringed the unwritten law of Gilgit.

It was with sincere pleasure that the English visitor, at that period, rode into this distant outpost of British arms, and received the warm welcome that was always extended to strangers by the little band of officers who were there upholding the honour of the British flag.

Gilgit itself, both in the extent of its cultivated area (over two square miles), in the richness and frequency of its orchard clumps, and in the size and comparative strength of its fort upon the river-bank, afforded an agreeable contrast to the villages hitherto passed. The British Agency, a cool and comfortable bungalow, owed its construction and its lawn-tennis ground to Colonel Biddulph twenty years before. The modern importance of the place and the improved appearance of affairs were, however,

mainly the work of Colonel Algernon Durand. A light suspension bridge had replaced the old rope bridge across the river, and at every turn were evidences of increasing security and of British occupation.

Outside the Agency at Gilgit, in a grove of trees, lies the grave of the first British pioneer of frontier exploration on this part of the border. This was Mr. G. W. Hayward, who, having been sent out by the Royal Geographical Society in 1868 to explore the Pamirs from Yarkand, and having failed in that direction, determined to try his fortune from another quarter, and to penetrate to the forbidden region by way of Yasin and the passes over the Hindu Kush. The story of his murder in Dakot, in July 1870, by Mir Wali, the treacherous ruler of Yasin, acting, it is sometimes said, under the instructions of his father-in-law, Aman-ul-Mulk of Chitral, was told in his great work on Kashmir by Mr. Drew, who was at that time in the service of the Maharaja, and who recovered both the papers and the body of the murdered man.<sup>1</sup> When at Dakot in August 1885, as a member of Sir William Lockhart's Chitral mission, the late Colonel Woodthorpe met an eyewitness of the tragedy fifteen years earlier, and as this account has never yet been given to the public, it may be permissible to reproduce it here.

It is just before dawn in the valley of Dakot. Not far from a grove of pollard willows stands a single tent, through the open door of which the light falls upon the ground in front. In this tent sits a solitary weary man ; by his side,

<sup>1</sup> *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 1875, pp. 451-454.

on the table at which he is writing, lie a rifle and a pistol, loaded. He has been warned by one whose word he cannot doubt, that Mir Wali is seeking his life that night, and he knows that from among those dark trees men are eagerly watching for a moment of unwariness on his part to rush forward across that patch of light-illuminated ground and seize him. All night he has been writing to keep himself from a sleep which he knows would be fatal; but as the first rays of dawn appear over the eternal snows, exhausted nature gives way; his eyes close, and his head sinks—only for a moment; but in that moment his ever-watchful and crafty enemies rush forward, and before he can seize his weapons and defend himself, he is a prisoner, and is dragged forth to death. He makes one request—it is to be allowed to ascend a low mound, and take one last glance at the earth and sky he will never look upon again. His prayer is granted; he is unbound, and as he stands up there, tall against the morning sky, with the rising sun lighting up his fair hair as a glory, he is beautiful to look upon. He glances at the sky, at those lofty snow-clad peaks and mighty glaciers reaching down into the very valley, at the valley itself, with its straggling hamlets half-hidden among the willow groves, whence rises the smoke of newly kindled fires; he hears the noise of life beginning again, the voices of women, and the laugh of happy children, and then with firm step he comes down, back to his savage foes, and calmly says, "I am ready." He is instantly cut down by one of Mir Wali's men, and as he falls he receives his death-stroke from the sword of his treacherous friend, whose honoured guest he had so lately been.<sup>1</sup>

Mir Wali was subsequently killed by order of Aman-ul-Mulk, who was anxious to ingratiate himself with the British authorities. One of the actual

<sup>1</sup> This scene has been made the subject of a poem by Sir H. Newbolt in the publication entitled *Admirals All*.

murderers was always believed to be Mohammed Rafi Khan, who, at the time of my visit to the frontier, was, in spite of his many iniquities, still Hakim or Governor of the Laspur district in Chitral. Six months later, when the rebellion broke out, and the British force was beleaguered in Chitral Fort, the old scoundrel justified both his reputation and his career by openly joining the enemy. Meanwhile the brave young Hayward sleeps under the orchard trees at Gilgit, a type of British pluck and an inspiration to his successors.



## II

### FROM GILGIT TO THE PAMIRS

On every side now rose  
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,  
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles  
In the light of evening, and, its precipice  
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning caves,  
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
To the loud stream.

SHELLEY, *Alastor*.

FROM Gilgit two routes are available to the extreme confines of the Indian Empire and the passes of the Hindu Kush. In a country which consists perhaps of the most stupendous mountain network that anywhere exists, it is not surprising to learn that the only avenues of exit or entrance are provided by the river gorges, which are hewn like deep, irregular gashes in the heart of the mountainous mass. On the eastern side the Hunza River, furrowing a rugged channel down the Hunza-Nagar Valley, opens up such a passage to the western extremity of the Mustagh or Ice-range—the physical prolongation of the Karakoram Mountains—which at this point, abutting on the Taghdumbash Pamir, merges in the main range of the Hindu Kush. On the west the



THE DARKOT PASS AND GLACIER FROM YASIN VALLEY



ABOVE THE SNOW LINE KIKKOIN NUTTI  
RAKAPUSHI IN THE BACKGROUND



Gilgit River flows down from Yasin, and may be followed up towards the Darkot and Baroghil Passes across the true Hindu Kush, whence a descent is made into the valley of the Upper Oxus and Wakhan. It was by the former route that I rode and marched, through some of the most wonderful surroundings and over some of the most inaccessible ground in the world, from Gilgit to the Kilik Pass, a distance of 140 miles.

I hesitate to say whether the Hunza Valley is more remarkable for its political and human interest or for its scenery, and in this chapter I shall have something to say about both. Perhaps, as its natural features may appeal to a wider audience—for the grandeur of peak and spire, of glacier and gorge, will affect those who may be indifferent to the ethnology or history of so petty a branch of the human family as is hidden away in this chink of the world's surface—I may deal first with them. In the Hunza Valley and its immediate environs, within a radius of fifty miles of its capital, Baltit, are congregated some of the most striking physical phenomena in the universe. Here a tumult of the highest known peaks lift their unscaled pinnacles above the deepest valleys, the most sombre ravines. Within a range of seventy miles there are eight crests with an elevation of over 24,000 feet, while the little state of Hunza alone is said to contain more summits of over 20,000 feet than there are of over 10,000 feet in the entire Alps. The longest glaciers on the globe outside of the Arctic Circle pour their frozen cataracts down the riven and tortured hollows of the

mountains. Great rivers foam and thunder in flood-time along the resounding gorges, though sometimes reduced in winter—the season of low waters—to errant threads. Avalanches of snow, and—still more remarkable—of mud, come plunging down the long slopes, and distort the face of Nature as though by some lamentable disease. In this great workshop of primeval forces, wherever the imprisoned energies are not still at work, they have left their indelible traces in the stormy outline of the crags, in the watermarks of lakes that have burst their bounds and have fled, in the artificial structure of the alluvial terraces, in the deep scouring of the impetuous streams. In the valley of the Hunza River, up which my track lay, Nature would seem to have exerted her supreme energy, and in one chord to have comprised almost every note in her vast and majestic diapason of sound. For there she shows herself in the same moment both tender and savage, both radiant and appalling, the relentless spirit that hovers above the ice-towers and the gentle patroness of the field and orchard, the tutelary deity of the haunts of men.

Never can I forget the abruptness and splendour of the surprise when, shortly after leaving the fort of Chalt, thirty miles beyond Gilgit, there soared into view the lordly apparition of the great mountain Rakapushi, lifting above the boulder-strewn or forest-clad declivities of his lower stature 18,000 feet of unsullied ice and snow to a total height of 25,550 feet above the sea. Next to the sight of Kangchenjunga from beyond Darjiling, this is the





RAKAPUSHI PEAK FROM THE TOP OF THE BABUSER PASS



NANGA PARBAT FROM ROUPEL BRIDGE

finest mountain spectacle that I have seen. Rakapushi is one of the most superbly modelled of mountains. Everywhere visible as we ascend the valley, he keeps watch over the lower summits and over the smiling belts of green and the orchard plots below that owe their existence to his glacial bounty. But up above, where no raiment but the royal ermine clothes his shoulders, his true majesty is best revealed. There enormous and shining glaciers fill the hollows of his sides, the ice-fields stretch for mile on mile of breadth and height, and only upon the needle-point of his highest crest is the snow unable to settle. In that remote empyrean we visualise an age beyond the boundaries of human thought, a silence as from the dawn of time. As we gaze at Rakapushi we find an unconscious answer to the poet's query—

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang) -  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?

For there, in more than fancy, we can

Walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns.

Before us are

The firths of ice  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.

And though the eye, aching with the dazzling vision, may seek a transient solace in the restful verdure of the lower and terraced slopes, may wander over the cultivated surface of the alluvial fans, and may even dip into the deep gorge where the river hums



1000 feet below our feet, yet it cannot for long resist the enchantment of those glimmering peaks, and ever hankers for the fascination of the summit. Rakapushi stands there and will stand as long as this orb endures, under the heavenly vault, under the eternal stars, ancestral, godlike, sublime, tremendous.

This remote mountain valley has an importance for Englishmen which its geographical isolation would lead few to suspect. It is one of the northern gates of India, through which a would-be invader must advance if he advance at all. It is further inhabited by a people of whom till thirty years ago very little was known, but whose reputation for warlike ferocity had combined with the natural strength of their mountain lair to produce in the minds of their neighbours an impression of terror—in their own, one of absolute invincibility. Hunza or Kanjut, as it is called by the people living to the north of the Hindu Kush, with whom the Hunza men have ethnological and other connections, is the state on the right or northern bank of the river to which it gives its name. Nagar is the state on the left or the southern bank. The confines of the former extend to the crests that are the watershed between the Indus and Oxus basins. The barriers of Nagar are the great glaciers that fill the troughs of the main Himalayan range. The larger part of the surface, however, of both states is given up to snow and ice, and the cultivable and inhabited areas, which are co-extensive, are limited to a few hundred square miles, supporting in the case of Hunza a

population of about 6500, and in that of Nagar of 7000 souls.

Both peoples claim a similar origin, and undoubtedly belong to the same stock. Whether this is a primitive Aryan type, whose characteristics have been preserved by their isolation in these mountain retreats, or whether they are of Turanian descent, but have been Aryanised by Hindu immigration and conquest from the south, I will not here pause to discuss. The weight of argument seems, on the whole, to be in favour of the former hypothesis. Yeshkun is the name of the tribal caste to which the majority claim to belong, and Burishki or Burishaski is the dialect which they speak. It belongs to the Scythian as distinguished from the Iranian group. They call themselves Birchik, which is identical with Warshik, the name borne by the cognate peoples of the Upper Yasin Valley.

Both peoples are also Mohammedans of a sort. The Nagar men are indifferent Shiahhs ; the Hunza folk are Maulais, or adherents of the sect sometimes known as Ismailis, whose spiritual head is the Aga Khan at Bombay. Religion, however, sits very lightly on the conscience of the men of Hunza. I could not ascertain that any of them feel it incumbent upon them to proceed on pilgrimage to Bombay ; and the Aga is only represented among them by certain *pirs*, or holy men, who extract a sort of Peter's pence from the people. Their scriptures are contained in a book entitled *Kalam-i-pir*. The Hunza mosques appear to be invested with no

particular sanctity, and to be regarded with very scant reverence. One of them was even occupied, when I passed through, by a company of traders. The superstitious fear of spirits has a far stronger hold than veneration for the Prophet, and nearly every man carries a number of charms attached to some part of his dress or person. I even saw them affixed to the leg of a horse. Before the advent of Europeans these and similar superstitions prevailed to an almost grotesque degree. Even now they are but dubiously thawing beneath the mild rays of civilisation.

The men of both peoples are of a robust, hardy, masculine type, and frequently of more than the average stature. The most strongly marked feature is the nose, which is large and prominent. They wear their hair, which is almost always black, shaven on the top of the crown and down the middle of the back of the head; but it is suffered to grow upon the temples, and falls in a thick bunch, or sometimes in a cluster of ringlets, behind either ear. They are very vain of these lovelocks, which are greatly admired by the opposite sex. A devoted lover will sometimes go so far as to cut off his curls and present them to the object of his attachment as a pledge of his affection. The common dress is a rolled woollen cap, a brown or grey woollen *choga* or dressing-gown, loose white pantaloons, and stockings stuck into flexible leather top-boots; while the poorer orders have their feet either bare or sandalled with leather *pabus*, made of ibex-skin. Following the Mussulman practice, the women of the higher classes,

though unveiled, are kept carefully concealed. There is no law against polygamy or concubinage, but the narrowness of means is found to be a strong practical argument in favour of a single establishment.

The Hunzakuts or Kanjutis enjoy the reputation of being the finer and more virile race ; and during the inter-tribal warfare which was always more or less going on, except on the occasions when the two states combined their forces against a common foe, Sikh, Dogra, or British, they were invariably victorious. Their most notable characteristic, however, was their raiding and slave-hunting proclivity. Apologists for Hunza explain that the insufficiency of the cultivated area of the state to sustain the excessive population naturally drove the superfluous manhood to this source of mingled exercise and subsistence. However this may be, the Kanjutis were the scourge of the entire frontier, and might have been styled the Turkomans of the Hindu Kush. By a clandestine arrangement with China, to whom they paid some sort of allegiance, the caravans between Yarkand and Leh were recognised as their special perquisite. Marching swiftly by difficult mountain tracks, they burst upon the defenceless lines of animals and men, appropriated the former and sold the latter into slavery in Chinese Turkestan. The Shingshal Pass, which is one of great difficulty and elevation (14,719 feet), was one of their favourite lines of advance and retreat ; and they pushed their daring forays as far as Kulanuldi in the upper valley of the Yarkand river, and even to Shahidula on the

main caravan road from Leh. Up to 1890 there was many a victim of their forays still an exile in Kashgaria ; but largely owing to the exertions of the British representative in Kashgar, over 2000 slaves, one-fourth of whom were reported to be of Indian origin, were afterwards released ; while in 1897 the sale or tenure of slaves was finally prohibited throughout Chinese Turkestan by proclamation of the Taotai. For this, if for no other reason, the subjugation by England of the Hunza man-hunters was an incalculable service to the whole mountain border, which groaned under their cruel rapine.

Both states are, and have long been, ruled by a line of chieftains, said to have originally sprung from a common ancestor, and constantly blended by intermarriage. These rulers are styled Thum (pronounced Tum) in the language of the country, and Mir by the peoples living beyond the Hindu Kush. The Thums of Hunza and Nagar were looked upon as very big personages by their own peoples and by the entire neighbourhood, and were, in fact, excellent types of the petty but truculent Asiatic independent monarch ; until, in an evil day for themselves, their propensity for fratricide, parricide, and other domestic escapades, coupled with the man-hunting tastes and the political intrigues to which I shall presently allude, brought them into sharp collision with the British power.

The history of the connection of Hunza-Nagar, first with Kashmir, and then with the Indian Government, affords indeed a synopsis in miniature of the same problem that is perpetually in

course of evolution along the entire frontier. It is a history whose successive stages are independence, breaking into lawlessness and outrage, open hostility, bringing defeat, and final control, resulting in contented allegiance.

Eighty years ago, when Golab Singh, the Raja of Jammu, to whom the British Government had just given, or rather sold, Kashmir, was endeavouring to subjugate and define the outlying and Trans-Indus portions of his new possession, and when neither he nor the Indian Government knew very clearly where that border was, we catch a glimpse of the Hunza - Nagar states that is prophetic of later experiences. Lieutenants Vans-Agnew and Young were sent in 1847 to the Gilgit frontier in the Hunza Valley, which was at that time at Chaprot, and at this point asked leave of Ghazanfur Khan, the Raja of Hunza, to visit his territory. This request was contemptuously refused, and a long spell of hostilities ensued between the two tribes and the Dogra forces, in which both were alternately victorious, but throughout which the Hunza and Nagar territories, though occasionally invaded, remained practically inviolate. Nevertheless the two rulers were at length impelled to recognise the suzerainty of Kashmir, to whom Nagar from the year 1868, and Hunza from the following year, paid an annual tribute of gold-dust (extracted by washing from the Hunza River), fruit, horses, and hounds. Later on this tribute was more than compensated by small annual subsidies paid to the two chiefs by the Kashmir Government.

Major Biddulph, the first British Agent at Gilgit, was the first Englishman to visit Hunza, in 1876. Ghazan Khan, the son and successor of Shah Ghazanfur, was then upon the throne. He was still the ruler when, ten years later, in April 1886, Sir W. Lockhart's Mission passed through Hunza on its way to the Pamirs. The old Raja, who as yet knew very little of the British, and who was swollen with his own importance, was not the man to lose so excellent an opportunity of asserting his power. He refused to allow the Mission to proceed upon its journey unless Colonel Lockhart would promise to restore to him Chaprot, which had long been a bone of contention between the Hunza and Nagar chiefs, and which was at that time, under an arrangement made by the Kashmir Government, held in *jagir* by a younger son of the Nagar Raja, while a Kashmir garrison occupied the fort. It was only with much difficulty and by astute diplomacy that Colonel Lockhart got through. Later in the same year old Ghazan Khan was murdered by his son Safdar Ali Khan, a peculiarly bloodthirsty ruffian, who at the same time poisoned his mother, threw two of his brothers down a precipice and made away with a third—a proceeding which did not excite any particular astonishment in that country, and which its perpetrator announced in the following euphemistic terms to his suzerain, the Maharaja of Kashmir :

By the will of God and the decree of fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself on the throne of my ancestors.

In 1888 Captain Grombchevski and his Cossacks appeared upon the scene, and executed that private sally across the Hindu Kush into Hunza whose immediate result was still further to inflate the truculent Raja with his own importance, but whose ulterior consequences were to prove so little favourable to its originators' designs. What was the exact nature of the intercourse between the two parties has never been divulged, but that some sort of agreement was arrived at was subsequently admitted by the Thum himself. From this time forward Safdar Ali Khan began to speak of the White Monarch, as he called the Tsar of Russia, as his friend, and in his correspondence and conversation to allude to himself as the equal of that Sovereign, of the Emperor of China, and of the Empress of India—a quartet of potentates who, in his opinion, divided the globe. In the same year the combined forces of Hunza and Nagar marched down the valley and expelled the Kashmir garrison from the fort of Chalt, which had long been within the Kashmir border. It was, however, recovered by the Kashmiris before the end of the year.

Matters having reached this stage, it was considered desirable by the Indian Government to intervene, with a view, if possible, to anticipating any larger trouble that might threaten to occur. Captain (afterwards Colonel) A. Durand, who had been appointed to the post from which, nine years earlier, Major Biddulph had been withdrawn, was dispatched by the Indian Government to Hunza and Nagar to enter into negotiations with the rulers



of those states. Conditions were formulated, and an agreement was signed with both, by which the Rajas acknowledged the suzerainty of Great Britain (as the overlord of Kashmir), and opened their territories to the free passage of officers deputed by the British Government; while the Hunza chieftain further undertook to desist from the raiding upon which he and his people had hitherto thrived. In return, substantial subsidies—in addition to the allowance already made by the Kashmir Durbar—were to be given by the Indian Government. Safdar Ali Khan, though boorish and at times insolent, appeared to be satisfied with this arrangement, from which, he wrote to Colonel Durand, “he would never deviate as long as he lived”; and later in the same year he gave a civil reception to Captain Young-husband, who returned *via* Hunza to Gilgit from his exploration of the Mustagh mountains.

So matters remained until 1891, when news arrived that Uzar Khan, the heir-apparent of Nagar, seemingly fired by emulation of the earlier exploits of the Hunza chief, had also murdered two of his brothers and announced his intention, if he could catch him, of doing the same to a third. Simultaneously the two Rajas made combined preparations once again to seize the forts of Chalt and Chaprot—a design in which they were cleverly balked by a rapid move on the part of Colonel Durand. In this summer, and just at this time, there appeared upon the Pamirs the first of the famous Russian “hunting expeditions” of Colonel Yonoff. Safdar Ali Khan was ascertained to be

in communication with them, and an embassy from him arrived at Marghilan in August to interview Baron Vrevsky, the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, who was making a tour upon the Alai. Safdar Ali's next step was to intercept and decline to forward the correspondence to the Indian Government of Captain Younghusband, who was on an official mission to the Pamirs, and to refuse a passage to Captain Younghusband himself. Meanwhile, as early as 1890, the time-honoured raiding had again been resumed. Thus in every particular the agreement of 1889 was being or had been systematically violated by the signatory chiefs.

It was in these circumstances that, Colonel Durand's scanty force at Gilgit having been reinforced by officers, men, and guns from India, it was decided to send an ultimatum to the recalcitrant rulers, informing them that a new fort was to be built at Chalt and that a military road would be constructed to Hunza on one side of the river and to Nagar on the other, so as to give freedom of access to the frontier, which the Indian Government had determined to hold. The chiefs, who had already burned their boats, began at once to collect their forces, ill-used Colonel Durand's messenger, and returned an insolent answer to the ultimatum. Safdar Ali, who excelled in this sort of correspondence, declared in one letter that "he cared nothing for the womanly English, as he hung upon the skirts of the manly Russians, and had given orders to his followers to bring him the Gilgit Agent's head on a platter". In another letter he wrote: "I will

withstand you even though I have to use bullets of gold. We will cut off your head, Colonel Durand, and then report you to the Indian Government."

Then followed the brief but memorable campaign of December 1891, by which, in less than three weeks, these illusions were abruptly dispelled, the two chieftains were humbled and crushed, the two states subdued, and the British flag carried by a few hundred native soldiers, under the leading of a handful of British officers, to the crest of the Hindu Kush.<sup>1</sup> The narrative of this campaign, which added no fewer than three names to the proud roll of the Victoria Cross, has been admirably told by Mr. Knight, who himself took part in it, in his book, *Where Three Empires Meet*, and I should display but a poor regard for my readers were I by a later and inferior repetition of his narrative to qualify the pleasure which they must already have derived from the perusal of his work. Travelling over the ground as I did less than three years after the fighting, I was able to see how the conquerors had in the interval utilised their fortune, and by what steps and how surely this nest of mountain-wasps, who stung and worried upon the frontier, and made Simla quake, had been converted into a useful and reliable outpost on the extreme ramparts of our Indian Empire.

<sup>1</sup> On December 2, 1891, the advance was begun, with a force numbering a little over 1000 men. Nilt Fort was carried by storm, with a loss of six killed and twenty-seven wounded. After a stoppage of eighteen days, the cliff beyond was stormed and carried on December 20. On December 21 the Khan of Nagar made submission, the Khan of Hunza and his Wazir having already fled. On December 30 the pursuing party reached the Kilik Pass and the Hindu Kush.





*Underwood Press Service*

NATIVE SPORTS AT GILGIT

The entire Hunza Valley, from Gilgit to the crest of the Kilik Pass, may be divided into two sections, the first extending for a little over sixty miles from the confluence of the Hunza River with the Gilgit River, three miles below the Gilgit Fort, as far as the two capitals, Baltit and Nagar ; the second section following the upper waters of the same stream from that point for eighty miles to the Chinese frontier on the Taghdumbash Pamir. A good deal of traffic to and fro had taken place on the former section since the war, and something in the nature of a road had been constructed or hewn out of the mountain-side. Before that time the road, if it could be so called without a grim jest, consisted in many parts of rocky and ladder-like tracks up the sides of the cliffs, and of narrow galleries built out with timbers round the edges of the precipices.

As I started from Gilgit upon the first stage to Nomal, I rode into a dust-storm that raged for two hours, and rendered even more dolorous the sorrowful sterility of the scene. A pitiless wind drove a scud of dust and gravel into eyes, nostrils, ears, and mouth, and rendered it almost impossible to see one's horse's head. Our men, who had been sent on in advance with the baggage mules, took eight hours to cover the eighteen miles. Sullenness is the main characteristic of the scenery. The river, with a rushing coffee-coloured flood from 50 to 100 yards in width, has cut for itself a deep trench through the ends of the alluvial fans that have poured down from the side valleys, or through the terminal moraines pushed forward by gigantic glaciers behind. Sometimes its

vertical walls are 300 feet high, while the slope of the upper cliff may rise for another 3000. The alluvial fans, which are exactly so shaped, the handle being towards the gorge from which they issue, and the broad end abutting upon the river, support a scanty growth of trees or scrub. Sometimes they slope to the water's edge, at others they terminate in gravelly cliffs. The road or track runs at one moment over the sand or amid boulders in the river-bed; at another it climbs a *pari* or steep cliff 1000 feet above. The mountains look as if they had passed through a seven-times-heated furnace, and had had all life scorched out of their veins. Scarcely a sign of vegetation was encountered, except at Nomal, until we reached the oasis of Chalt, where is a fort that had been the frontier outpost of Kashmir arms prior to the campaign of 1891, and was now occupied by seventy men of the Imperial Service troops. The inhabitants, who had been scared away in former days by the terror of Hunza raids, were returning, and the cultivated area had already considerably increased. There I was met by the Raja of Chalt and Chaprot, a grandson of old Jafar Khan, the Thum of Nagar. He was a Jewish-looking lad, with prominent nose, black hair curling behind his ears, and a brown rolled cap on his head, with an amulet containing a text from the Koran affixed to it.

Below the fort of Chalt we crossed by a light suspension bridge, built at the time of the campaign, to the left or Nagar bank of the river, and presently ascended a *kotal* or ridge which the natives, who might have utilised it for a very serious resistance,

foolishly abandoned to the advancing British force on December 1, 1891. The troops had then to climb to the summit by steep zigzags along the side of the mountain; but the road is now carried round the rocks overhanging the river. It is at this point that Rakapushi bursts, with all his splendour, upon the traveller's vision; which, indeed, he never quits until after we have left Baltit. Happy should be the people from whose eyes such a spectacle is never absent; and had poetry, instead of rapine, been the particular aptitude of the men of Hunza, Rakapushi must have created a folk-lore or inspired a legend.

At about the fortieth mile up the valley we come to the broken-down fort of Nilt, which was the scene of the two most brilliant achievements of the '91 campaign. Every one who is familiar with its incidents will remember that this was the spot at which the Hunza-Nagar men had concentrated the whole of their defensive strength; that Colonel Durand, in command of the expedition, was wounded here on the first day of fighting; that the gate of the fort was blown up with gun-cotton, at the imminent risk of his life, by Captain Aylmer, and the fort itself carried by storm; that the advance was then delayed for nearly three weeks by the strong *sangars*, or stone breastworks, that had been constructed and filled with their best sharpshooters by the enemy on the opposite side of the deep *nullah* beyond, completely blocking the way up the valley; that this position was eventually taken by Lieutenants Manners Smith and Taylor and their Gurkhas and Dogras, who scaled the vertical cliff-wall, over



1000 feet in height, below the uppermost *sangar*, and surprised and put to the sword its defenders ; that all resistance then collapsed, and the surrender and occupation of the two capitals speedily ensued. With all these details I was already familiar ; but I confess to having been surprised at the extraordinary natural strength of the position, and to having under-estimated the bravery involved in its capture. The fort, although a rickety old place in itself, occupied the entire space between the base of the mountain and the edge of the deep gorge in which the river flows several hundred feet below. The small and sloping piece of ground up which the British were compelled to march to the assault was completely swept by rifle-fire from its walls. Captain Aylmer ought to have been killed several times over while creeping twice along the wall to ignite the fuse in the gate. Finally, the terrific cliff which Lieutenant Manners Smith scaled would not suggest that form of approach any more than would Shakespeare's cliff at Dover. The inhabitants of the place had developed into eager cicerones, and were apparently as proud of the manner in which their fort had been taken as could possibly be the intrepid handful of heroes who added this brilliant chapter to the records of British military prowess. I had the further advantage of travelling in the company of, and going over the ground with, Sir H. Lennard, who had served as a volunteer in the campaign.

From Nilt on the Nagar bank and from Maiun on the opposite or Hunza side of the valley commences a series of charming oases or belts of

cultivation, belonging to the respective states. In these a walled fort, containing or surrounded by a rabbit-warren of mud hovels, commonly rises in the midst of carefully terraced fields, planted with millet, wheat, barley, buckwheat, or lucerne, and of orchard clumps, producing a rich spoil of apricots, walnuts, apples, pears, melons, mulberries, peaches, and grapes. Delicious rills of water, issuing from glacier sources, trickle through the cultivated plots. On the Nagar bank the green spots are more frequent and more gracious, for they have a superior supply. Finally, on both banks the cultivation merges in a broad and continuous strip, towards the upper end of which the two capitals—if, indeed, these fort-villages are worthy of such a name—are situated. Nagar—which I was unable to visit, the rope bridge across the river having broken down—is planted on the bank of the Maiatsil or Hispar River, a confluent of the Hunza River, into which it flows five miles below the fort and town. Baltit, the chief place of Hunza (there being no town or village of the latter name), crowns a loftier and more picturesque elevation at a little distance from the right bank of the Hunza River, and takes its title, as does its neighbour Altit, from the Baltis of Baltistan, by a contingent of whom the two castles were built, as a wedding-present to the daughter of a Balti ruler, who, long years ago, wedded a former Mir of Hunza.

After crossing the river back again to the Hunza bank by a suspension bridge, replacing the old rope bridge, we came to Aliabad, a fort-village, where were the barracks for the Kashmir troops of the

Hunza garrison. We next passed two small villages built on the top of rocky mounds, and named respectively Hyderabad and Chamar Kun (*i.e.* Iron Fort), and were presently met, at a short distance outside Baltit, by the Raja, Mohammed Nazim Khan, by his brother, Nafiz Khan, and his Wazir, Humaiun Beg, who rode with us to the bungalow of Lieutenant Gurdon, at that time acting as Political Officer in Hunza, and afterwards Political Officer at Chitral. The Raja was attired in a bright yellow velvet tunic covering white pantaloons that were tucked into long leather boots. The Wazir was in purple velvet.

After the flight of the murderous Safdar Ali Khan at the end of 1891, Humaiun Beg, who belonged to the hereditary family of Wazirs of Hunza, and had occupied that post under old Ghazan Khan, but who had been ejected by Safdar Ali, and had taken refuge in Chitral, was installed by the British as temporary Governor of the petty state pending the decision of the Government of India as to the new ruler. When Mohammed Nazim was appointed, Humaiun resumed his former post of Wazir, which he long occupied with the greatest advantage to the state. He was a man of uncommon shrewdness and ability, and on more than one occasion later, notably in the Chitral campaign of 1895, proved his absolute loyalty to the British. For this and other services he was in 1898 appointed a Khan Bahadur. Travelling, as I did, in his company for several days, I formed a high regard for this unusual man, who struck me as the most agreeable and

capable personality whom I met in the Hindu Kush States. He was about forty-five years of age, though his hard life had greyed his beard and made him look older. In his earlier and unregenerate days he had been a great leader of raids, and had conducted one of the most renowned and successful of the Hunza forays far into the territory of Yarkand. When Safdar Ali Khan started upon his debauch of general assassination, Humaiun was fortunately absent from Hunza, and succeeded in effecting his escape. His two children, however, were at Baltit, and fell into the hands of the Thum, who, reluctant to belie his homicidal reputation, fully intended to put them to death. After the success, however, of the British at Nilt, he was in such a hurry to escape the Sahibs that he had not time to carry out his resolve. He retained sufficient presence of mind to carry off Humaiun's wife, who was reputed to be the best-looking woman in Hunza; but she was subsequently recovered and restored to her husband from Yarkand. All these details I learned in the course of my numerous conversations with the Wazir.

Mohammed Nazim Khan, the Thum, who was to be my host, had fortunately been ill at the time of Safdar Ali's family clearance, and had accordingly escaped the fate of his brothers, being supposed to be not worth the killing. He was the son of Ghazan Khan by another wife. At the time of my visit he was about twenty-eight years of age, and his conduct as ruler had fully justified the choice made by the Indian Government. He possessed good features

and an amiable expression, particularly when he smiled and disclosed a row of singularly good teeth. His black hair was cut close on the forehead and in the middle of the head ; but hung in very long locks behind his ears upon either shoulder. He usually wore a white turban wound round a conical skull-cap and the costume which I have previously described. He had two wives, by whom he was the father of one son and two daughters.

I visited him in the so-called castle of Baltit, a most picturesque five-storeyed edifice—the model of a feudal baron's stronghold—that rises to a considerable height above the low buildings of the town. The streets or alleys of Baltit are almost as steep as staircases, and the fort is planted at the very top of the town, which contained a population of about 1300 souls. At the gate I was received by the Raja, and we climbed together to the upper storey by wooden ladders conducting through hatchways in the floor, until we emerged upon an open space on the roof, adorned with rude mural decorations and a little native wood-carving. Here the Russian explorer, Captain Grombchevski, had been received, and had opened negotiations with Safdar Ali Khan in 1888. A small chamber opens on to this terrace, spread out with carpets, and furnished with a low divan, upon which we took our seats. From the terrace there is a wide and glorious outlook over the flat-roofed cubes of the town, each with a square orifice in its mud ceiling for light and smoke ; over the cultivated fields and orchards beyond, all aglow in the afternoon sun ; down to the deep grey gorge,



*Figure 10-10*

THE CASTLE OF BATH



with the silken thread of the river whispering many hundreds of feet below; and up to the eternal snows and the glistening spear-point of Rakapushi. Not less remarkable than this panorama, though in a different sense, is the view in the opposite or northern direction, immediately behind the town. Right above it towers a great mountain mass, and this again is backed by a fantastic grouping of needle-spires. The town of Baltit, in addition to its situation, is also distinguished for an artificial cutting right through and round the side of the hill below which it stands, this arduous work having been accomplished with the most primitive wooden implements and with curved ibex-horns by the inhabitants, in order to conduct to the lower levels the waters of a glacier stream behind.

The sister, formerly the rival, state of Nagar I was unable, as I have explained, to visit, but I subsequently made the acquaintance of the ruling Thum, Sikandar Khan, a splendid polo player, and a man of singularly fine appearance, whose features would have not belied the Hellenic descent that is claimed by many of the mountain tribes of the Himalayas and Hindu Kush, and that was typified by his Christian name.

Of the two peoples the Hunza men have always been the more warlike. They are also excellent mountaineers, their whole lives being spent among rocks and crags. In the various expeditions in which their levies have since fought under British officers, they have more than once been employed in turning an enemy's flank by scaling almost inaccessible



heights, and have acquitted themselves right well. No doubt they were great rascals in their free-booter days, but slave-hunting being now out of vogue, they turned the same energies with cheerful alacrity to less questionable pursuits. I learned to like those of them in whose company I marched, and at the end of my journey I voted them the manliest and most attractive of the Aryan tribes of the Hindu Kush. The Nagar people also accepted their beating with dignity, and have never since given any trouble. Safdar Ali successfully escaped the long hand of the British *raj*, and being regarded by the Chinese in some sort as a tributary or subject, was detained by them at Urumchi, in the New Dominion. Uzar Khan, his fellow-fratricide of Nagar, who could claim no similar refuge or consideration, was surrendered and immured in the state prison of Hari Parbat at Srinagar. Old Jafar Khan, his father, though suspected, managed to escape positive incrimination, and was left undisturbed at Nagar, where he continued, a senile phantom, to survive. The younger son, Sikandar Khan, wisely sided with the English, accompanied Colonel Durand's force, and received his reward in being recognised as ruler.

The only external difference in the political status of the two communities arising from the new order was that they were no longer permitted to fight each other, to enslave their neighbours, or to coquet with the foreigner, but were obliged to conform their political relations to the views of the Indian Government. I know of no case in history where conquest

was so rapidly followed by contentment, or where the beaten party so soon became the fellow-combatants and allies of their victors. When the Chitral crisis occurred in 1895, the two Mirs furnished at their own request 300 levies and 600 coolies for Colonel Kelly's relief expedition, in addition to the permanent body of levies raised from both states; and both chiefs appeared in person at Gilgit at the head of their men. Tranquil in the assured enjoyment of their independence, and in the undisturbed cultivation of their lands, and yet eager to fight for a suzerain whom they respect, the Hunza-Nagar tribes have thus been a living answer to those persons who contended in 1891-92 that we should inflict an irreparable injury upon them and heap up certain trouble for ourselves, by interfering with their liberty, which, as interpreted by their chiefs, was merely the liberty to harry and plunder and slay their less masculine or warlike neighbours. The people themselves extracted very little from the raids, the proceeds of which were commonly pocketed by the *khans*, and there was quite as much satisfaction within as without the borders of Hunza when the embargo was finally declared. As a further illustration of the peace that was already settling down upon the land, I may mention that in May 1895, for the first time in history, the Mir of Hunza visited the once rival state of Nagar. In bringing about these results, and in teaching the tribesmen that England is their friend as well as master, too much credit can scarcely be given to the series of young British officers—as a rule, only subalterns in

rank—who successively filled the post of British Agent in the Hunza Valley.

Less than ten years afterwards, when I was Viceroy, I invited the whole of these border chieftains down to Calcutta as the guests of Government, and we there renewed the friendly contact of 1894. Among my possessions is a photograph of the chiefs that was taken on that occasion, and bears their signatures. We gave them an evening party at Government House, where they particularly enjoyed the ices, which they had never seen or tasted before; and I can recall the picture of the old Raja of Astor, who was not much accustomed to the use of a chair, seated on the marble floor, wearing an immense white turban, and stuffing a strawberry ice with his fingers into his mouth.

At intervals since we have exchanged salutations from a great distance, and I can never forget those manly and genial highlanders of the Hindu Kush.

From Baltit Lennard and I commenced our march upon the second stage of the Hunza Valley road to the Pamirs. The distance to the Kilik Pass is about eighty-two miles, over one of the worst tracks in the world. At a little beyond Baltit the valley of the Hunza River, which from Chalt has pursued an easterly course, turns due north, and the river cuts a deep gash or furrows an uproarious channel along its bottom in its descent from the watershed of the Pamirs. The scenery also changes. In place of the richly cultivated terraces and the abounding orchards of both the Hunza and the Nagar slopes in the lower valley, we find only rare

villages and still rarer cultivation, and are in a region of rocks and stones. Big glaciers propel their petrified cascades to the very edge of the river. In many places this requires to be forded. Sometimes the road is only conducted round the edge of the precipices that overhang the torrent by artificial ladders and ledges, built out from the cliff with stones loosely laid upon supports of brushwood and timber jammed into the interstices of the rock. This sounds very dreadful, but in practice is much less alarming, the galleries, though only lasting for a few days, being sufficiently strong at the beginning, and being slightly inclined inwards toward the face of the cliff.

Over this vile stretch of country there are two tracks, the upper or summer track, which avoids the river-bed, then filled with a fierce and swirling torrent, and climbs to the summit of the cliffs, several thousand feet above the water; and the lower or winter track, which can only be pursued when, the melting of the snow by the hot summer suns being over, the current dwindles to a number of fordable channels, across and amid the boulder-piled fringes of which the traveller picks his way. The second track is not commonly available till the beginning of October; but a few cloudy days had sensibly lowered the river, and it was thought that, with the aid of the Thum's people, who accompanied us in large numbers, the route might be found practicable, except in a few places where, to avoid the still swollen stream, we should require to scale the heights. The whole of our baggage, tents, etc., had

to be carried on the backs of men, the route being quite impracticable for baggage-animals. We had riding-horses ourselves, but there were many places where these had to be abandoned and swum across the river ; while in others we were compelled to ford it on their backs. This was the least agreeable experience of our march, the current being swift, and the glacier-grey water being icy cold. The Hunza men, however, besides being strong and willing, proved to be fearless swimmers. Stripping, they plunged into the water and swam on either side of our ponies, holding them up and preventing them from being swept down. In order to reward them we offered prizes for a swimming contest across the river and back. Their style is a hand-over-hand swimming, and many of the men were carried down at least 300 yards before they succeeded in getting out on the farther bank. They also swam with *mussuks*, or inflated goat-skins, lying with their stomachs on the skins, the hinder legs of which they tied round their thighs, and propelling themselves with their hands and feet. By this method in flood-time they bring their women across the river, strapping the lady on to a *mussuk* and swimming at its side themselves.

From Bulji Das onwards the valley is called Little Guhjal, its inhabitants being Wakhis, who originally emigrated from Big Guhjal, or Wakhan, and who still speak the Wakhi language. On the second day, soon after we had passed the fort at Gulmit—where, as at all the villages, travelling in the company of the Raja, we were met and played

in by the village band—a cliff was pointed out to us where the amiable Safdar Ali, in the course of his flight in December 1891, had thrown down and killed one more of his brothers. On this day we crossed the snout of three glaciers; one of which, the great Pasu glacier, comes striding down to the river's edge with a wilderness of *séracs* and ice-towers, and terminates in a prodigious moraine. On the third day we crossed the Batur glacier, which is a long twisting ice-flood over twenty miles in length. Its surface was split up with lofty pinnacles and crevasses, and we picked our way across in a little over an hour, over ice-hills sprinkled with a black gravelly debris. The retrospect was a frozen strait of choppy waves, ridge upon ridge of ice, some snow-white, others as black as soot. This glacier is constantly changing its track, and is sometimes quite impassable. In this neighbourhood, also, we observed gold-washing on the banks of the river: a man crouching with a wooden trough on a heap of stones by the water's edge, shovelling into it a pile of soil, and then laboriously washing and sifting it out with the aid of a bowl made from a gourd. In this way a few grains are penuriously extracted, and are bought by the Mir with grain, being used by him to pay his annual tribute of twenty ounces of gold-dust to the Kashmir Government, as well as the few *tolas* of gold which he is still allowed to pay to China.

On the fourth day we passed on the right or west bank of the river the *nullah* that conducts to the difficult Irshad Pass leading to Sarhad, in Wakhan, as well as to the Chilinji Pass, which conducts into

the Karumbar valley of Yasin. According to the presence or absence of snow on a particular peak in this part of the main valley do the Hunza people know whether the Irshad Pass is or is not open. A little later we crossed, on the east bank, the deep and narrow gorge down which the Khunjerab River flows from the Khunjerab Pass, leading on to the Taghdumbash Pamir. On the fifth day, following up the valley, which gradually rose, and was filled with clumps of willow and birch in the river's bed, we reached Murkush, just below the junction of the two *nullahs* that conduct respectively to the Kilik and Mintaka Passes, leading on to the same Pamir. Pursuing the former or left-hand of these, we camped at an elevation of 13,860 feet (having risen 5400 feet since leaving Baltit), at a few miles from the foot of the Kilik Pass. On the morrow we crossed the latter. I took the elevation on the summit with a boiling-point thermometer, ordinary thermometer, and aneroid, and found it to be 15,870 feet. The top of the Kilik is a long flattish plateau, covered with stones and interspersed with grassy swamps and standing water. There was no snow on the pass itself, though the snow-line was but little above us on the surrounding mountains, which were draped in white. This is the pass of which Captain Grombchevski, who crossed it in August 1888, penned the somewhat hyperbolic report that it is "exceedingly easy, so that a cart with a full team of horses could follow it". Here we bade good-bye to the Thum of Hunza and his men, the limits of whose jurisdiction we had reached, and were met by Kasim Beg,

the Kirghiz chief of the Taghdumbash Pamir, who was a Chinese subject, and who had received instructions to attend upon us while in Chinese territory.

I sat down on a rock at the top of the pass and completed a letter to the *Times*, as whose special correspondent I was acting. The letter would go southwards with the streams that flow into the Indus and so into the great Indian Ocean. My own face was turned towards the north, where at my feet I could see the springs whose waters, running eastwards, were ultimately to lose themselves in the great Tibetan depression of Lob Nor; while within a few miles of me, on the other side, the rills were trickling westwards that would presently merge in the mighty Oxus, and wend their way through the heart of Central Asia to their distant home in the Aral Sea. I stood, therefore, literally upon the water-parting, the Great Divide of the Asiatic Continent. India, with all its accumulated treasures, lay behind me, ring-fenced by the terrific barriers through and across which I had laboriously climbed. Central Asia, with its rival domination and its mysterious destinies, lay before me. I was on the southern eave of the "Roof of the World". Before me, in the language of Milton,

A frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land  
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile : all else deep snow and ice.

But the Pamirs are another story, which I cannot tell here.





## THE OLD PERSIAN



## THE OLD PERSIAN

### *An Introduction to "Haji Baba"*

"Virtuous and vicious every man must be—  
Few in the extreme, but all in the degree."

POPE, *Essay on Man*.

IN the first decade of the nineteenth century Persia was for a short time the pivot of the Oriental interest of English and Indian statesmen. But little known and scarcely visited during the preceding century, it suddenly and simultaneously focussed the ambitions of Russia, the apprehensions of Britain, the Asiatic schemes of France. The envoys of Great Powers flocked to its Court, and vied with each other in the magnificence of the display and the prodigality of the gifts with which they sought to attract the superb graces of its sovereign, Fath Ali Shah. Among these suppliants for the Persian alliance, then appraised at much beyond its real value, the most assiduous and also the most profuse were the British, agitated at one moment by the prospect of an Afghan invasion of India, at another by the fear of an overland march against Delhi of the combined armies of Napoleon and the Tsar. These apprehensions were equally illusory; but while they lasted they supplied

the excuse for a constant stream of embassies, some from the British Sovereign, others from the Viceregal court at Calcutta, and were reproduced in a bewildering succession of Anglo-Persian Treaties. Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, Sir Gore Ouseley, and Sir Henry Ellis were the plenipotentiaries who negotiated these several instruments; and the principal coadjutor of the last three diplomats was one James Justinian Morier, the author of *Haji Baba*.

Born and nurtured in an Oriental atmosphere (though educated at Harrow), he was one of three out of four sons, whom their father, himself British Consul at Constantinople, dedicated to the Diplomatic or Consular service in Eastern Europe or in Asia. His Persian experience began when at the age of twenty-eight he accompanied Sir Harford Jones as private secretary, in 1808-1809, on that mission from the British Court direct which excited the bitter jealousy and provoked the undignified recriminations of the Indian Government. After the Treaty had been concluded, James Morier returned to England, being accompanied by the Persian envoy to the Court of St. James, who figured in *Haji Baba* as Mirza Firuz, and whose droll experiences in this country he subsequently related in the volume entitled *Haji Baba in England*. While at home, Morier wrote the first of the two works upon Persia, and his journeys and experiences in and about that country, which, together with the writings of Sir John Malcolm, and the later publications of Sir W. Ouseley, Sir R. Ker Porter, and

J. Baillie Frazer, familiarised the cultivated Englishman of the first quarter of the century with Persian history and habits to a degree far beyond that enjoyed by the corresponding Englishman of the present day. Returning to Persia with Sir Gore Ouseley in 1811-12 to assist the latter in the negotiation of a fresh Treaty, to meet the novel situation of a Franco-Russian alliance, Morier remained in Teheran as Chargé d'Affaires after his chief had left, and in 1814 rendered similar aid to Sir H. Ellis in the conclusion of a still further Treaty superseding that of Ouseley, which had never been ratified. After his return to England in 1815, appeared the account of his second journey. Finally, nearly ten years later, there was issued in 1824 the ripened product of his Persian experiences and reflections in the shape of the inimitable story to which he gave the title of *The Adventures of Haji Baba of Ispahan*.

The book at once became a favourite of the cultured reading public, and passed speedily through several editions. That popularity has never since been exhausted ; and the constant demand for new issues is a proof not merely of the intrinsic merit of the work as a contemporary portrait of Persian manners and life, but also of the fidelity with which it continues to reflect, after the lapse of a century, the salient and unchanging characteristics of a singularly unchanging Oriental people. Its author, having left the Diplomatic service, died in 1849. The celebrity of the family name was revived in later diplomatic history by the services of his

nephew, the late Sir Robert Morier, who died in 1893, while British Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

Such was the historic *mise en scène* in which James Morier penned his famous satire. As to the work itself, the idea of criticising, and still more of satirising, a country or a people under the guise of a fictitious narrator is familiar in the literature of many lands. More commonly the device adopted is that of introducing upon the scene the denizen of some other country or clime. Here, as in the case of the immortal Gil Blas of Santillane, with whom Haji Baba has been not inaptly compared, the infinitely more difficult plan was preferred of exposing the foibles of a people through the mouth of one of their own nationality. Haji Baba is a Persian of the Persians, typical not merely of the life and surroundings, but of the character and instincts and manner of thought of his countrymen. And yet it is from his lips that flows the delightful stream of naïve confession and mordant sarcasm that never seems either ill-natured or artificial, that lashes without vindictiveness, and excoriates without malice. In strict ratio, however, to the verisimilitude of the performance, must be esteemed the talents of the non-Oriental writer, who was responsible for so lifelike a creation. No man could have written or could now write such a book unless he were steeped and saturated, not merely in Oriental experience, but in Oriental forms of expression and modes of thought. To these qualifications must be added great powers of insight and long observation. James Morier spent less than six

years in Persia; and yet in a lifetime he could scarcely have improved upon the quality of his diagnosis. If the scenic and poetic accessories of a Persian picture are (except in the story of Yusuf and Mariam and a few other instances) somewhat wanting, their comparative neglect is more than compensated by the scrupulous exactitude of the dramatic properties with which he invested each incident in the tale.

The hero, a characteristic Persian adventurer, one part good fellow and three parts knave, always the plaything of fortune—whether barber, water-carrier, pipe-seller, dervish, doctor's servant, sub-executioner, scribe and *mollah*, outcast, vendor of pipe-sticks, Turkish merchant, or secretary to an ambassador—equally accepting her buffets and profiting by her caresses, never reluctant to lie or cheat or thief or to get the better of anybody else in a warfare where every one was similarly engaged in the effort to get the better of him, and equipped with the ready casuistry to justify any transgression of the moral code—Haji Baba never strikes a really false chord, or does or says anything intrinsically improbable; but, whether in success or in adversity, as a victim of the roguery of others, or as a rogue himself, is faithful to a type of human character that modern times and a European surrounding are incapable of producing, but that is natural to a state of society in which men live by their wits; where the scullion of one day may be the grandee of the next, where the loftiest is not exempt from the extreme vicissitudes of fortune, and where a



despotic sovereign is the apex of a half-civilised community of jealous and struggling slaves.

Perhaps the foibles of the national character upon which Morier was most severe are those of imposture in the diverse and artistic shapes in which it is practised by the modern Persian. He delighted in stripping bare the sham piety of the austere Mohammedan, the gullibility of the pilgrims to the sacred shrines, the sanctimonious humbug of the lantern-jawed devotees of Kum. One of his best portraits was that of the wandering dervish, who befriends and instructs and ultimately robs Haji Baba, and who thus explains the secret of his trade :

“It is not great learning that is required to make a dervish ; assurance is the first ingredient. By impudence I have been a prophet, by impudence I have wrought miracles, by impudence I have restored the dying to health —by impudence, in short, I lead a life of great ease, and am feared and respected by those who, like you, do not know what dervishes are.”

Equally unsparing was his exposure of the reputed pillars of the Church, *mollahs* and *mujtaheds*, as illustrated by his excellent stories of the *Mollah Bashi* of Teheran, and of the *Mollah Nadan*. He ridiculed the combined ignorance and pretensions of the native quacks, who have in nowise improved since his day. He assumed, as might still be safely done, the venality of the *kadi* or official interpreter of the law. He placed upon the lips of an old Kurd a candid but unflattering estimate of the Persian character, “whose great and national vice is lying, and whose weapons, instead of the sword and spear,

are treachery, deceit, and falsehood". And he revelled in his tales of Persian cowardice, whether it be at the mere whisper of a Turkoman foray, or in conflict with the troops of a European Power; putting into the mouth of one of his characters the famous saying which it is on record that a Persian commander of that day actually employed: "O Allah, Allah, if there was no dying in the case, how the Persians would fight!" In this general atmosphere of cheerful rascality and fraud an agreeable climax is reached when Haji Baba is all but robbed of his patrimony by his own mother!

It is the predominance in the narrative of these and other of the less attractive aspects of Persian character that has led some critics, writing from the charitable but ill-informed distance of an English arm-chair, to deprecate the apparent insensibility of the author to the more amiable characteristics of the Iranian people. Similarly, though doubtless with an additional instigation of ambassadorial prudence, Sir Harford Jones-Brydges, Morier's own chief, wrote in the Introduction to his own Report of his Mission to the Persian Court these words:

"One may allow oneself to smile at some of the pages of *Haji Baba*; but it would be just as wise to estimate the national character of the Persians from the adventures of that fictitious person, as it would be to estimate the national character of the Spaniards from those of Don Raphael or his worthy coadjutor, Ambrose de Lamela. . . . Knowing the Persians as well as I do, I will boldly say the greater part of their vices originate in the vices of their Government, while such virtues as they do possess proceed from qualities of the mind."

To this nice, and even plausible, discrimination between the sources respectively of Persian virtues and vices, it might be sufficient answer to point out that in *Haji Baba* Morier took up the pen of the professional satirist, an instrument which no satirist worthy of the name from Juvenal to Swift has ever yet dipped in honey or in treacle alone. But a more candid and certainly a more amusing reply was that which Morier himself received, after the publication of the book, from the Persian envoy whom he had escorted to England. This was how the irritated ambassador wrote :

“ What for you write *Haji Baba*, sir ? King very angry, sir. I swear him you never write lies ; but he say, yes—write. All people very angry with you, sir. That very bad book, sir. All lies, sir. Who tell you all these lies, sir ? What for you not speak to me ? Very bad business, sir. *Persian people very bad people, perhaps, but very good to you, sir.* What for you abuse them so bad ? ”

There is a world of unconscious admission in the sentence which I have italicised, and which may well stand in defence of Morier's caustic, but never malicious satire.

There is, however, a deeper interest in the book than that which arises from its good-humoured flagellation of Persian peccadilloes. Just as no one who is unacquainted with the history and leading figures of the period can properly appreciate Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* or *Gulliver's Travels*, so no one who has not sojourned in Persia, and devoted considerable study to contemporary events, can form any idea of the extent to which *Haji Baba*

is a picture of actual personages, and a record of veritable facts. It is no frolic of imaginative satire only; it is a historical document. The figures that move across the stage are not pasteboard creations, but the living personalities, disguised only in respect of their names, with whom Morier was brought daily into contact while at Teheran. The majority of the incidents so skilfully woven into the narrative of the hero's adventures actually occurred, and can be identified by the student who is familiar with the incidents of the time. Above all, in its delineation of national customs, the book is an invaluable contribution to sociology, and conveys a more truthful and instructive impression of Persian habits, methods, points of view, and courses of action, than any disquisition of which I am aware in the more serious volumes of statesmen, travellers, and men of affairs. I will proceed to identify some of these personages and events.

No more faithful portrait is contained in the book than that of the king, Fath Ali Shah, the second of the Kajar Dynasty, and the direct ancestor of the present Shah. His vanity and ostentation, his passion for money and for women, his love of flattery, his discreet deference to the priesthood (illustrated by his annual pilgrimage, in the garb of penance, to the shrine of Fatima at Kum), his royal state, his jewels, and his ambrosial beard, form the background of every contemporary work, and are vividly reproduced in Morier's pages. The royal processions, whether in semi-state when he visited the house of a subject, or in full state when he went

abroad from the capital, and the annual departure of the royal household for the summer camp at Sultanieh, are drawn from the life. In modern days they have been shorn of a good deal of their former splendour. The Grand Vizier of the narrative, "that notorious minister, decrepit in person, and nefarious in conduct", "a little old man, famous for a hard and unyielding nature", was Mirza Sheffi, who was appointed by Fath Ali Shah to succeed Haji Ibrahim, the minister to whom his uncle had owed his throne, and whom the nephew repaid by putting to death. The Amin-ed-Dowleh, or Lord High Treasurer, "a large coarse man, and the son of a greengrocer of Ispahan", was Mohammed Hussein Khan, the second personage of the Court. Only a slight verbal change is needed to transform Haji Baba's master, Mirza Ahmak, the king's chief physician, into Mirza Ahmed, the *Hakim Bashi* of Fath Ali Shah. Namerd Khan, the chief executioner and subsequent chief of the hero, whose swaggering cowardice is so vividly depicted, was, in actual life, Feraj Ullah Khan. The commander of the King's Camel Corps, who had to give up his house to the British *Elchi*, was Mohammed Khan. The Poet Laureate of the story, Asker Khan, shared the name of his sovereign, Fath Ali Khan; and the story of his mouth being filled on one occasion with gold coins, and stuffed on another with sugar-candy, as a mark of the royal approbation, is true. The Sirdar of Erivan, "an abandoned sensualist, but liberal and enterprising", was one Hassan Khan; and the romantic tale of the Armenians, Yusuf and Mariam, down to the minutest

details, such as the throwing of a hand-grenade into one of the subterranean dwellings of the Armenians, and the escape of the girl by leaping from a window of the Sirdar's palace at Erivan, is a reproduction of incidents that actually occurred in the Russo-Persian war of that date. Finally, Mirza Firuz Khan, the Persian envoy to Great Britain, and the hero of *Haji Baba in England*, is a portrait of Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, a nephew of the former Grand Vizier, who visited London as the Shah's representative in 1809-10, and who was subsequently sent on a similar mission to Petersburg. This individual made a considerable sensation in England by his excellent manners and witty retorts, among which one is worthy of being quoted that does not appear in Morier's pages. When asked by a lady in London whether they did not worship the sun in Persia, he replied, "Oh yes, madam, and so would you in England too, if you ever saw him!"

The international politics of the time are not without their serious place in the pages of *Haji Baba*. The French Ambassador who is represented as retiring in disgrace from Teheran,<sup>1</sup> was Napoleon's emissary, General Gardanne, who, after his master had signed the Peace of Tilsit with the Tsar, found a very different estimate of the value of the French alliance entertained by the Persian Court. The English embassy, whose honorific reception is described,<sup>2</sup> was that of Sir Harford Jones. The disputes about hats, and chairs, and stockings, and other points of divergence between English and

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxvii.

Persian etiquette, are historical ; and a contemporary oil-painting of the first audience with the Shah, as described by Morier, still exists on the walls of the royal palace of Negaristan in the Persian capital. There may be seen the portraits of Sir Harford Jones and Sir John Malcolm, as well as of General Gardanne, grouped by a pardonable anachronism in the same picture. There is the king with his spider's waist and his lordly beard ; and there are the princes and the ministers of whom we have been reading. The philanthropic efforts of the Englishmen to force upon the reluctant Persians the triple boon of vaccination, post-mortem examination, and potatoes, are also authentic.

Quite a number of smaller instances may be cited in which what appears only as an incident or an illustration in the story is in reality a historical fact. It is the case that the Turkoman freebooters did on more than one occasion push their *alamans* or raids as far even as Ispahan. The tribe by whom Haji Baba is taken captive in the opening chapters is seemingly rather the Yomuts beyond the Atrek River than the Tekke Turkomans of Akhal Tekke. I myself rode in 1889 over the road between Abbasabad and Shahrud, where they were in the habit of swooping down upon the defenceless and terror-stricken caravans ; and the description of the panic which they created among vastly superior numbers of Persians is in nowise exaggerated. The pillar of skulls which Aga Mohammed Shah is represented as having erected<sup>1</sup> was actually raised by that

<sup>1</sup> Cap. vii.

truculent eunuch at Bam in Persian Beluchistan, and was there noticed by an English traveller, Sir Henry Pottinger, in 1810. I have seen the story of the unhappy Zeenab and her fate described in a review of *Haji Baba* as more characteristic of the seraglio at Stamboul than of the harem at Teheran. This is an ignorant remark ; for this form of execution was more than once inflicted during the reign of Fath Ali Shah. At Shiraz there still exists a deep well in the mountain above the city, down which, until recently, women convicted of adultery were hurled ; and when I was at Bokhara in 1888 there had, in the preceding year, been more than one case of execution by being thrown from the summit of the Minar-i-Kalan or Great Minaret.

It is an interesting but now wellnigh forgotten fact that the Christian dervish who is represented by Morier<sup>1</sup> as publicly disputing with the *mollahs* in a *madresseh* at Ispahan, and as writing a refutation of the Mohammedan creed, was no other than the famous Henry Martyn, who created a prodigious sensation by the fearlessness of his polemics while at Shiraz, and who subsequently died at Tokat, in Asiatic Turkey, in 1812. The incidental mention of the great diamond or "Mountain of Light" that was worn by Fath Ali Shah in one of his *bazubands* or armlets, though historically inaccurate, is also of interest to English readers ; since the jewel alluded to is the Daria-i-Nur or River of Light, the sister-stone to the Koh-i-Nur or Mountain of Light, which, in the previous century, had been carried from

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lix.



Persia to Afghanistan, and in this century passed through the hands of Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, into the regalia of the British crown. The "River of Light" was still at Tehcran, when I was there, although rumours have since been heard of attempts to sell it.

In two respects the Persia of *Haji Baba* differs notably from the Persia of to-day. The national, and still more the court dress, as depicted by him, have been considerably modified. The Kashmir shawls and turbans, and the red-cloth gaiters, which were *de rigueur* at the court of Fath Ali Shah, were still seen when I was in Persia at the *salams* or official levees of Nasr-ed-Din Shah. They have since disappeared. No longer does the young dandy of modern Teheran wear the lofty black sheepskin *kolah* or hat, indented at the top and stuck on sideways, as described by Morier. A lower and less pretentious variety of the same head-gear adorns the brow of the *fin de siècle* Iranian gallant. Secondly, the Teheran of *Haji Baba* has been transmogrified almost out of existence; and, in particular, the fortified Ark or Palace of the earlier Kajars, with its watch-towers and the open porch over the gates in which the king sat to see reviews, and the lofty octagonal tower from which Zeenab was thrown, were long ago obliterated in the more spacious architectural reconstruction of Nasr-ed-Din Shah.

Unchanged, however, while I was in Persia, were those customs by which then, as before, the royal coffers required to be replenished or the royal purse relieved by the application of a judicious spur to the

backward generosity of the subjects of the King of Kings. Still, as described in *Haji Baba*, was the visit of the sovereign to any of his officials the recognised intimation that a large money equivalent was expected for the unsolicited honour. Still must the presents of the king be repaid by gifts of more than corresponding value to the bearers of the royal favour. Still was the sending of the royal *khalat*, or dress of office, adopted as an ingenious method of discharging the arrears of wages due to the royal ministers or servants. In one chapter<sup>1</sup> of *Haji Baba* the sub-lieutenant to the Chief Executioner gives an admirable account, as true now as when penned, of the methods by which salaries are capable of being recruited in Persia; and the speech of the Grand Vizier in a later chapter<sup>2</sup> on political morality as interpreted in that country, would, I am confident, have been enthusiastically re-echoed by every subsequent incumbent of that high office.

The art, however, in which Morier especially excelled was that of introducing, so to speak by a side wind, as a subordinate incident of the narrative, or as a spontaneous comment on the lips of the various *dramatis personæ*, informing and luminous knowledge upon the local characteristics of places, or the social customs of peoples. For instance, he took advantage of being at Meshed to bring in the passion-play of Hussein, as annually enacted by the Shiah Mohammedans in the month of Moharrem; of mentioning Herat to introduce the *bad-i-sad-o-bist-rux* or famous "wind of 120 days"; of con-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxviii.

ducting his hero to Kum, to describe the curious prescription of *bast* or sanctuary that still adheres to that sacred spot ; and of his arrival at Baghdad, to inflict upon him the familiar pest of the Baghdad pimple. His description of camp-life among the Turkomans is only surpassed in fidelity by his corresponding picture of the vagrant existence of the border Kurds ; nor is there anywhere to be found a more dramatic realisation of the incidents of a nomad encampment, the arrangement and meals and etiquette, the striking of the tents, and the straggling march of the tribes with their flocks and herds, than in the narrative of the childhood of the Kurdish slave Zeenab.

It is to be noted that Morier represented her as a Yezidi or devil-worshipper (though it is more than doubtful whether the Yezidis could ever with justice be so described), and attributed her origin to one of the incestuous nocturnal orgies that were said to be practised by that people, and that gave rise to the epithet *Chiragh Sunderun*, or Lamp Extinguishers. It may be observed, however, that in such a case Zeenab would have known her parentage on the maternal rather than on the paternal side ; whereas Morier, by a curious error, represented her as knowing her father, but being in ignorance of the identity of her mother.

In different chapters of *Haji Baba* we are further initiated into the domestic life and habits of the Persians. We learn that it is considered a mark of respect for a man to keep his hands and feet hidden beneath the folds of his dress. In two places we

have mention of the profoundly Persian device of conforming with the letter, while trifling with the spirit of the religious law, by neatly ripping open a seam as a substitute for rending the fabric of a garment in token of woe. We are reminded of the prohibition from exacting interest that is imposed upon the true believer, and of the still common custom of divination by extracting a *fal* from the pages of Hafiz or Saadi. We may gain a good deal of information about the culinary methods of Turkomans, Persians, and Kurds; the operations of the *hammam* or bath are disclosed to us, and we are surreptitiously introduced along with the hero to the mysteries of the Persian harem or *anderun*, and its petty existence of inane frivolity, open jealousy, and clandestine intrigue. The death and funeral of the old barber provide an opportunity for a valuable account of Persian customs upon those occasions.

Similarly, the story of Yusuf and Mariam is utilised to furnish an equally interesting description of the Armenian ritual in cases of betrothal and marriage. Incidentally, the return of the poet Asker from his captivity among the Turkomans acquaints us with the curious habit of bringing back a person supposed to be dead, not by the door, but through the roof; and when Haji Baba, from the terrace of the doctor's house, listens to "the distant din of the king's band, the crash of the drums, and the swell of the trumpets, announcing sunset", he is alluding to a custom that has prevailed for centuries in all the Mohammedan courts of Central Asia and India, that is supposed to be a relic of extinct sun-worship, and

that was still observed when I was there in the seats of royal or princely rule, alike at Teheran, Ispahan, and Kabul.

Mention should not be omitted, in passing, of the perfect familiarity of the author both with cultured and colloquial Persian and with the Persian classics. An Oriental metaphor, however hyperbolic, slips as easily from his lips as though it had always rested there. Quotations from Hafiz and Saadi play as large and as apposite a part in his dialogue as they do to this day in the conversation of any well-educated Asiatic who has been brought up in countries where Persian is the language of literature and fashion. No one who has not been in the East can fully appreciate the talent for self-detachment and for successful assimilation of an alien mode of thought and expression which such an exercise demands.

Nor, though this was beside the main purpose of Morier's work, should we shut our eyes to the side-lights which are thrown upon foreign nations ; and which, while they lend additional testimony to the insight of the writer, are invaluable as showing the point of view from which European institutions and customs were then and are still for the most part regarded by the Asiatic Mussulman. How amusing is the description, placed in the mouth of the Chief Physician,<sup>1</sup> of the main external differences between Persians and Europeans, and of the contemporary costume, regarded by the Persians as so improper, of the English doctor who came in the train of Sir Harford Jones.<sup>2</sup> In those days the only *Feringhis*

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xx.

known to the Persians were the English, the Russians, and the French ; and it no doubt was a matter of genuine surprise to the Persian ambassador to find when he arrived at Constantinople that the Franks consisted of many nations with as many kings. The Persians were particularly concerned to find out the truth about " the infidel Boonapoort ", whose career they much admired from its supposed resemblance to that of their own hero Nadir Shah. Nor is there less humour in Haji Baba's attempt to make progress in the study of their language by writing down the words that he heard most frequently in the conversation of the French envoys, viz. *Sacré, Paris, and l'Empereur*. That the Persian Court was thoroughly alive to the jealous and interested struggle of the two Powers, England and France, to acquire political ascendancy at Teheran, is sufficiently evident from the history of the period, but is admirably illustrated by the diplomatic argument placed by Morier still in the mouth of Fath Ali Shah.<sup>1</sup> Finally, can any pupil of Party Government, and still more a member of the British Government, read without a delicious emotion this description of the system under which is conducted the government of the greatest empire in the world ?

Then they have certain houses full of madmen, who meet half the year round for the purpose of quarrelling. If one set says white, the other cries black ; and they throw more words away in settling a common question than would suffice one of our *muftis* during a whole reign. In short, nothing can be settled in the state, be it only whether a

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxvi.

rebellious Aga is to have his head cut off and his property confiscated, or some such trifle, until these people have wrangled.

Such are among the many merits of Morier's immortal work. Even were the Persians to be blotted out of existence as a nation, even though Teheran and Meshed and Shiraz were to share the fate of Persepolis and Susa, it would yet remain as a portrait of unrivalled humour and accuracy of a people who, though now in their decadence, have played an immense and still play a not wholly insignificant part in the complex drama of Asiatic politics. To explain the history and to elucidate the character of this composite people great tomes have been written. I am conscious myself of having added no inconsiderable quota to their bulk; but if all this solid literature were to be burned by an international hangman to-morrow, and were *Haji Baba* and the *Sketches* of Sir John Malcolm alone to survive, I believe that the future diplomatist or traveller who visited Persia, or the scholar who explored it from a distance, would from their pages derive more exact information about Persian manners, and acquire a surer insight into Persian character, than he would gain from years of independent study or months of local residence. Together the two works, now a century old, are an epitome of modern and moribund Iran.

## THE CAPITAL OF ANNAM





## THE CAPITAL OF ANNAM

Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion. On the sides of the North is the City of the Great King. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.—Psalm xlviii. 2, 12, 13.

I KNOW of only one, and that a very brief description of Hué, the capital of the Empire of Annam, in the English language. Nor is this easily accessible to the reading public, seeing that it is enshrined in a Parliamentary paper as the Report of a Consular official. No other Englishman appears to have described, less than half a dozen have probably ever visited, the place; and if I may generalise from the queries or answers addressed to me on my return, I am led to infer that not one person in twenty has the faintest idea where it is. Indeed, the whole country of Annam seems to be almost a *terra ignota* to our countrymen; and when a Member of Parliament asked me how I had found the tea plantations there (he was thinking, I suppose, of Assam), while another inquired if I came out of Annam through the Pamirs, I was led to form conclusions unfavourable to the geographical knowledge not so much of our legislators in particular, as of the intelligent public at large, of whom they are presumably the

most superior specimens. Perhaps, therefore, it will be as well to begin by saying that if you take a map of Eastern Asia, follow down the coast-line from below the great indentation that marks the southern limits of China proper, near the island of Hainan, and stop about half-way down this coast between Tongking and Cochin China, you will find the word Hué inscribed at a very short distance inland from the sea. This is the city, capital, and seat of government which I visited in the winter of 1892.

Ever since the Christian era, Annam has had a political and national existence, which, whether dependent upon, or independent of, the suzerain power of China, has possessed an individuality and displayed characteristics of its own. Throughout the greater part of this time, the central position of Hué, midway between Hanoi and Saigon, and its protection from hostile attack on the land side by mountains, on the sea side by the bar of its own river, some eight miles distant, and by the lengthy and easily defensible approach from the port of Tourane, have invested it with a capital importance, and made it the prize of warring dynasties. Even now in the rainy season it is by no means easy of access; my own journey from Tourane was conducted in a tempest that did not abate for sixteen days, that inundated the low-lying country for miles, and compelled my chair coolies to wade through water up to their waists. The scenery between the port and the capital (63 miles) is magnificent; for the road traverses a lofty and densely wooded range by a pass, 1550 feet above

the sea, called by the French the Pass of the Clouds, and originally barred by Annamite fortifications, and discloses views of landlocked lagoons, of villages nestling amid bouquets of palms, and of breakers crashing upon yellow sand spits or against rocky cliffs. The shorter river approach from Thuanan (when the bar is practicable) is not less pretty. Islets, once occupied by native forts, dot the broad surface of the estuary. On the banks elegant and fanciful pagodas peep from behind a screen of palms and bamboos, and the river winds in contented coils through a landscape of luscious verdure.

In a descriptive article nothing is so detestable as history ; and I will therefore omit the facts and dates that might shock the dilettante scruples of the amateur. He will be content to know that the city received its modern shape only at the beginning of the last century, when, after a period of civil war, it fell into the hands of the last surviving descendant of the Nguyen, or former ruling family, who, after recovering the crown, assumed the regnant title of Gia Long, and was the Louis XIV. of his country's fortunes. He built the citadel, an immense walled *enceinte* on the Vauban plan, with the aid of the French officers who had entered his service and assisted to place him upon the throne. He rebuilt and adorned the royal palace, with a strict regard for the best Chinese models ; and any work of distinction in the capital or neighbourhood is attributed to him with as unswerving regularity as to Shah Abbas the Great in the kingdom of Iran.

Occupying a flat position on the left bank of the river, the city presents no salient features upon approach, little being visible beyond the walls of the Citadel, and a pentagonal structure or tower inside it, which supports the Royal Standard. The Citadel is a bastioned quadrilateral, over 2000 yards in length on each face, entered by ten gates, with lofty two-storeyed gate-towers, over stone bridges crossing a moat 40 yards wide and 15 feet deep; 400 guns originally defended the embrasures, but are now rusting in a prudent seclusion. In the heart of this great and utterly indefensible enclosure, over which houses are scattered at wide intervals, and much of which consists of unoccupied ground, gardens, or swamps, is a second walled *enceinte* 750 yards square, containing the royal palace. The Emperor, women, and eunuchs exclusively people the smaller enclosure; the bodyguard, ministers, and mandarins, and a small native population inhabit the larger area. No European is permitted to reside there; and a too daring French speculator, who had ventured to build a two-storeyed abode on the forbidden ground, was condemned to an abrupt evacuation. A large fortified redoubt called the Mong-ka, on the eastern face of the Citadel, was ceded to the French in absolute possession in 1884, and contains the French garrison, composed of Marine Infantry, only 200 strong. A canal, called the Dong-ba, crossed by two wooden bridges, separates these official and military quarters from the native town. At the south-west corner of the Citadel is an elevated tower known as the Observa-

tory, and immediately behind it is the artificial platform or altar on which is performed the annual Sacrifice to the Earth.

Like all Annamite towns, the native quarter consists merely of a cluster of villages which, for protection's sake, have huddled together under the shadow of the Citadel. In the case of Hué, they exhibit no more than two long streets or bazaars parallel with the river, called respectively Cho Duoc and Cho Dinh, lined by crumbling pagodas, by tiled houses of wood belonging to the superior classes, and by the palm-leaf tenements of the lower order. In these streets moves a more parti-coloured throng than in other Annamite towns, for the people wear both turbans and tunics of cerulean blue and emerald green, which provide a pleasing diversion after the sombre browns and blacks of Tongking. Before Hué was known, the fancy of writers raised the population of the capital to a total of 150,000 inhabitants. Even now French books record 60,000 ; but, including the extreme outskirts of the collected hamlets, I should think that at the time of my visit 12,000 to 15,000 was a maximum limit. A great reduction was effected by the French after the attack upon their troops in the Citadel in 1885. Up till that time the interior was a rabbit-warren of native habitations ; but, in order to secure themselves against any repetition of the surprise, they swept the place clear of this perilous element, and are said to have turned as many as 30,000 persons out of the walled enclosure.

On the southern face of the Citadel the Truong

Tien, or Hué River, flowing down from picturesque mountains that rear their wooded cones at the distance of only a few miles in the interior, and amid whose defiles its course is soon obstructed by rocky rapids, spreads a shining belt, four hundred yards in width, between the native city and the French Residency, which is a large modern building with gardens sloping to the water. Hard by are some big sheds in which are housed the royal barges and canoes. On state occasions the Emperor goes forth in the imperial barge of red and gold, with a gilded dragon at the prow, towed by two long galleys manned by a hundred rowers in scarlet, who stand and move long sweeps to the rhythmical command of tomtoms, flutes, and castanets.<sup>1</sup> On the same or southern side of the river, at a distance of about two miles, is the most conspicuous object in the surrounding landscape. This is a mountain called Ngu Binh, or the King's Mountain, from having been constructed or shaped to its present outline by some earlier sovereign. Its sides are artificially scarped, so as to present the form of a truncated cone, or the lower half of the letter A, and are entirely planted with pines. Exactly facing the Palace Gate, it is designed to guard the imperial abode from peril, in deference to the popular superstition that places before the entry to every Chinese and Annamite house a screen of masonry, to ward off the *fengshui* or evil spirits, who are supposed to

<sup>1</sup> In the days of Gia Long and Minh Mang, in the early part of the century, the royal flotilla, for sea and river use combined, consisted of 700 to 800 boats and vessels of all kinds. But the majority of these have long ago disappeared. -

be on the look-out for any victim, from king to peasant, but are fortunately so stupid as to be incapable of getting round a corner. Elsewhere, however, I have never seen this barricade assume so colossal a shape, or conform to so haughty a conception.

In the royal palace I was received in audience by the young Emperor, Thanh Thai. His predecessor, Dong Khanh, who had been placed on the throne as a French nominee in 1886, died suddenly in 1889, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, from over-indulgence in the temptations of Oriental existence. The French were in rather a difficult position; for the deceased Emperor had belonged to a collateral branch of the reigning family, possessing no particular prestige, while the male children whom he left were mere infants. Accordingly, they discarded these altogether, and reverted to the original royal stock by hastily bringing out from virtual imprisonment in a part of the palace where his little life had hitherto been passed, the son of an uncrowned prince, who had been adopted as son and designated as successor by the Emperor Tu Duc. The boy who experienced this startling revulsion of fortune was only ten years of age at the time, and in 1892 was fifteen, being within a year of his Annamite majority. He assumed the ruling title of Thanh Thai, and added one more name to the august catalogue of the Sons of Heaven.

In consideration of the youthfulness of the new Emperor, the supreme power was nominally vested in a Council of Regency, consisting of two princes of



the blood, sons of former sovereigns, and three subjects, the senior of whom, or Third Regent, was really the most important person in the kingdom. But the actual authority rested with the Komat, or Secret Council, of which this individual was President, and of which the most influential regents were members. Such a delegation of sovereignty would not, however, in the Far East be considered as in any way derogating from the almost hieratic conception of the imperial character, developed by long centuries of Chinese ascendancy. The Emperor is the Hoang De, or Son of Heaven—a title involving no arrogant assumption of positive divinity, but an assertion of his representative functions as the sole mandatory of the Thuong De, or Supreme Lord, to his people; their king, their *pontifex maximus* and supreme judge, alone possessing the right to sacrifice on their behalf to the Lord of Heaven. This peculiar conception of a monarchy, absolute and uncontrolled, without limits and without constitution, defined only by a custom so sacred as to have become ritual, and by an immemorial code, could not be expected much longer to resist the contemptuous impact of Western ideas. It has since practically expired. But in Annam, not much less than in China, it still conferred on the wearer of the imperial yellow thirty years ago a prerogative which his subjects had not yet learned to impugn, and surrounded his person with all the stately ceremonial and the inscrutable reserve of an Asiatic régime. So sacred was the Sovereign that no subject might pronounce his name. His ministers

received his orders upon their knees, and only responded with bated breath. A thick curtain of mystery overhung the inner life of the palace and the details of the harem. Its courts were crowded with cunuchs and women, the last emperor having possessed as many as five hundred of the latter. The Emperor Tu Duc, who died in 1883, before French influence had been conclusively installed, maintained an even greater state. When he moved abroad twelve thousand persons, including the troops, were set in motion ; while the bodyguard of the Emperors Gia Long and Minh Mang numbered thirty thousand men.

In Korea I had been received in audience by the King at 4.30 in the afternoon, His Majesty having been in bed all the day. At Peking the ministerial audiences take place at 2 and 3 A.M. At Hué 9 A.M. was the appointed hour. Crossing the river in a *sampan*, I was met by a royal carriage with servants in red flannel tunics and conical hats, and was driven through the main gate of the citadel to the palace enclosure. On its eastern side runs an alley between two blind walls down to the water's edge, so as to admit of the embarkation of the Sovereign free from the intrusion of alien eyes. At the main gate of the palace, which consists of a fanciful, yellow-tiled pavilion, with projecting wings and an open veranda supported on painted columns<sup>1</sup>—the whole surmounting a heavy triple-arched

<sup>1</sup> It was from this veranda that the earlier sovereigns witnessed the march past of troops on review days. The Annamites call the gate *Ngo-mon*.

substructure built of large stones—I was received by the mandarins who were attached to me during my stay. We entered a paved quadrangle of great size, the nearer part of which is occupied by tanks of water, surrounded by a pierced balustrade, before and beyond which the visitor passes under two fantastic metal archways, whose supports are chiselled dragons of bronze, and whose cross-bar contains plaques of brilliantly coloured green, blue, and yellow enamel. The farther, or upper, portion, rises in the shape of two paved terraces, entirely unadorned, although at the base of the principal terrace two gilded bronze monsters grin horribly from pedestals on either side. At the upper extremity stands the great Hall of Audience, known as the Can Chanh.

This is an immense, double-roofed, yellow-tiled pavilion, in the Chinese style, with metal dragons at the ends of the ridge-pole, and enamelled panels inserted along its length. The entire front is open, but can be closed by folding doors of lattice work. The interior is paved with diamond-shaped bricks, and consists of five parallel aisles, separated from each other by huge wooden columns, upon whose surface golden dragons are lacquered on a background of red. Gold and red are, indeed, the prevalent and sole colours employed in the decoration ; and they reappear in the carved rafters of the lofty timbered roof. There are but two objects in this great hall—namely, a richly carved chair of red and gold dragons, standing upon a triple dais of red lacquer, overhung by an embroidered canopy, and

backed by a similar hanging, whereon a colossal dragon coruscates upon a background of scarlet; and, in front of this royal chair or throne, a single table of inlaid mother-of-pearl. Above, on the walls, are hung boards containing gilded sentences in Chinese characters from the classics.

In this building, at the festival of the New Year, and again on the Emperor's birthday, the Court of Hué is received in solemn audience by the Sovereign. The ceremonial is one of imposing and majestic simplicity. On the open terraces outside, in order of their rank, are ranged the mandarins, some six hundred in number, in gorgeous Court dresses and head-pieces, dating from the time of the Ming dynasty in China, and resembling those which I also saw at Söul in Korea. In the centre of the hall the Emperor sits upon the carved dragon chair. At his side servants wave huge feather fans. No subjects, except the princes of the Royal Family and the Court attendants, are admitted to the pavilion, whose distant arcades are plunged in gloom. A stillness that can be felt prevails. Motionless are the six hundred figures without; and the Emperor on his throne maintains an equally statuesque immobility. Suddenly, at the sound of bizarre music and a chant, the entire body of mandarins in unison raise their joined palms to the level of their heads, bring them down with a sweep to the knees, bow, kneel, and touch the ground with their foreheads. Seven times is this prostration, the *lai* of Annamite observance, repeated. Seven times in rhythmic cadence the tiara'd ranks rise and sink again, as a

field of ripe corn bows its head before the wind. The entire ceremony occupies fully ten minutes. It is wellnigh the last surviving relic of majesty, as it has for centuries been understood and honoured in the East.

Behind this hall extends a second paved court, terminating in a richly carved and gilded ornamental gateway, which, as preceding the palace, is regarded with peculiar reverence, and in passing or approaching which all Annamites must incline their heads. The central doorway, adorned with dragons painted upon a gold background, is the entrance that was reserved for the Emperor alone, or for the Imperial Commissioners from Peking, until, in 1884, the crowning evidence of Annamite humiliation was exacted by the admission of the French representative, M. Lemaire. A third quadrangle of great size succeeds, containing two immense vases of chiselled bronze, and a number of flowerpots of Chinese porcelain, exhibiting blue dragons on a white ground. Here I was met by the Third and Fourth Regents, and by a number of mandarins all in Court dresses of coloured velvets or brocades, with overtunic of transparent figured silk. By these gorgeous individuals I was conducted to the Second Audience Hall or Thai Hoa Tien—*i.e.* Hall of Vast Harmony—which stands in an analogous position, and almost exactly corresponds to the Hall of Public Audience, except that its pillars are unpainted and its decorations less rich. It is used for the Councils of State; and here the Emperors Gia Long and Minh Mang were wont to sit in conference with their

Ministers for three or four hours each day. In the middle, upon a dais, stands the royal throne, in front of which is a table, and behind it a huge mirror or cheval-glass in a gilt frame that was presented to the second of these Emperors by Louis XVIII. An immense glass and gilt chandelier, also a gift from France, hangs from the roof; and on the pillars and walls are suspended framed ground-plans of all the citadels in Annam. At a table in the corner of this building I drank tea with the regents, while the Emperor was apprised of our arrival.

The succeeding court is surrounded by a cloister, closed in with wooden panels and glass panes, traversing which, and passing a chamber crowded with eunuchs and servants, we entered the Cao Minh, or principal reception hall of the imperial residence. This is a long room of somewhat similar disposition, divided by columns into a number of parallel corridors, stocked with costly furniture and rare *objets d'art*. A table of red and gold lacquer stands against each column, and supports a glass case containing curios in crystal, metal-work, rhinoceros-horn or jade. On every side are disposed inlaid cabinets of mother-of-pearl, Sèvres vases, rich enamels, and lacquered screens. On the ceiling and walls are suspended embroidered hangings, and canopies and pictures representing Annamite battles. The whole resembles rather a gallery in some richly endowed museum than the audience-chamber of a monarch. A table stood in the centre; and, as we waited beside it, the young Emperor, attended by the Third Regent, entered at the back, and took his

seat at its head, motioning me to the left hand, or place of honour in Annam. He was clothed in a tunic of cerise-coloured brocade, reaching to the knees, below which loose white drawers descended to his feet. At his neck hung the Grand Cross and badge of the Legion of Honour (a peculiar superstition preventing the Annamites from ever wearing the sash of an order); and his hair, which, after the national custom, was twisted into a chignon at the back of the head, was entirely enveloped in a turban of yellow silk *crêpon*, the badge of imperial rank. The palace eunuchs stood in the background; and at the boy's left hand knelt the interpreter, with clasped hands, to whom he spoke in a very low voice, and in somewhat mechanical tones, having evidently been coached beforehand by the Regent as to what to say. He inquired after the Queen of England; but here his instructions must have stopped short, for he next proceeded to display an active interest in the health of the King. These little errors were, however, forgotten in the congratulatory glass of champagne which he then raised in honour of the British Sovereigns. When I left he walked in front of us to the door, and shook hands with us as we backed ourselves out.

The young Emperor's face had marked Annamite characteristics; a yellow skin, eyes of singular fullness and blackness, high cheek-bones, and somewhat projecting lips, already stained scarlet with the juice of the betel. His expression was one of gentleness and intelligence; and of his precocity there could be no doubt, seeing that he had recently taken to

himself three wives, and that a few days before he had slipped out from the palace and taken a jinriksha ride incognito in the town, to the unutterable scandal and fluttering of the Court doves of Hué.

The French attached a French tutor to his person; but this individual, who was by no means of becoming status, subsequently found his work the reverse of easy in disciplining a lad who was both an Emperor, a mortal, and the Son of Heaven.

Behind the Cao Minh extend a number of pavilions and detached structures, in which are the private quarters of the Sovereign and his seraglio, and the residences of the Queen-mothers. Of these ladies, all of them the wives or mothers of emperors, to whom is ceded at the Annamite Court a position of high moral influence and profound respect—the Emperor even addressing them upon his knees—there were three at Hué. The eldest was an old lady, eighty-four years of age, the mother of Tu Duc, who had for years pulled the strings of the Court from behind the *purdah* of an impenetrable seclusion. Once only was the French Resident admitted to the honour of an audience. A curtain was raised for one moment, and then let fall, allowing a glimpse of a venerable figure shrouded in masses of drapery. The second Queen-mother, aged fifty-seven, was one of the widows of Tu Duc, and the third was the mother of the reigning king.<sup>1</sup> These ladies had each a palace, a bodyguard, domestics, and dancing-girls of their own, as well as a fixed

<sup>1</sup> The Sovereign is called King or Emperor indiscriminately. The latter is technically correct; but the French more commonly use the word *roi*.



allowance from the State of 1300 dollars per annum and one thousand measures of rice.

A rigid etiquette and scale both of rank and maintenance exist in every department of the royal seraglio, which is continually being recruited by the daughters of mandarins, presented by their fathers to the King, and by young girls who are bought in the first place as actresses or dancers, but frequently become the concubines of the Sovereign. The wives of the previous Emperor, Dong Khanh, who numbered one hundred (this is the lowest estimate), were divided into nine ranks, each with different titles and allowances, paid in servants, money, rice, and silk. The principal wife, or Queen, had 130 dollars (less than £20) a year, twelve servants, three hundred measures of rice, and sixty pieces of silk. After they have once entered the palace, the Emperor's wives are never again seen by the outer world, with the exception of their mothers, until his death, when those of high rank are condemned to spend the rest of their existence in praying and watching over their husband's tomb ; while those of lower rank, if they marry again, are forbidden to wed a mandarin, and may only espouse one of the common people. Besides this mass of women, who are always about the Emperor, dressing him, looking after him, waiting upon him at meals, and probably bullying the life out of him with their jealousies and intrigues, the only other persons admitted to the private quarters are the palace eunuchs, of whom Dong Khanh had thirty-five of the highest rank, many of them married, and some with three or four wives.

There was also a female bodyguard, with livery of green tunic and red drawers.

The environs of Hué are even more interesting than the capital itself ; for amid exquisite surroundings of water, wood, and mountain, they contain several sites of structures associated either with the religious or the ceremonial aspect of Annamite monarchy. At a little distance above the citadel, on a knoll upon the left bank of the river, stands a tall, seven-storied tower, belonging to a decayed monastery of Buddhist bonzes. Hard by this is the Temple of Confucius, consisting of several halls and courts, whither the Emperor comes and offers homage once in each year ; and the Kuoc Tu Giam, or Imperial College, at which the graduates from the provincial colleges assemble for the studies and examinations preliminary to their final degrees.

On the opposite or southern bank, at a distance of about a mile and a half from the river, and somewhat to the right of the King's Mountain (whose summit was used for the same purpose by the Tayson usurpers in the eighteenth century), is the Altar of Heaven, whereupon once in every three years,<sup>1</sup> at the festival of Te Nam Giao, the Emperor makes sacrifice on behalf of his people to the Lord of Heaven. The altar is not, as at Peking, a triple terrace of white marble surrounded by lofty walls, and rising from the seclusion of an open park. At Hué the conception is less ornate and grand ; but

<sup>1</sup> The more correct observance, as practised at Peking, and observed at Hué till the present reign, is once a year.

from its greater simplicity and from its natural adjuncts, it is, in some respects, even more solemn. An immense quadrangular enclosure, surrounded by a low wall, contains four concentric stages or terraces ascended by steps. The three outer terraces are square, and the fourth or uppermost circular. Pines are planted symmetrically in rows in the two exterior enclosures, and give the place the appearance of a dense grove. The third quadrilateral is grassy and bare; and in the middle of this, to an additional height of 12 feet, rises the central platform, built of brick, with a cemented floor, 40 yards in diameter, surrounded by a pierced balustrade, and open to the vault of heaven. Upon its surface nothing is visible but some great holes or sockets, in which are planted the masts that sustain the sacrificial tent of azure blue.

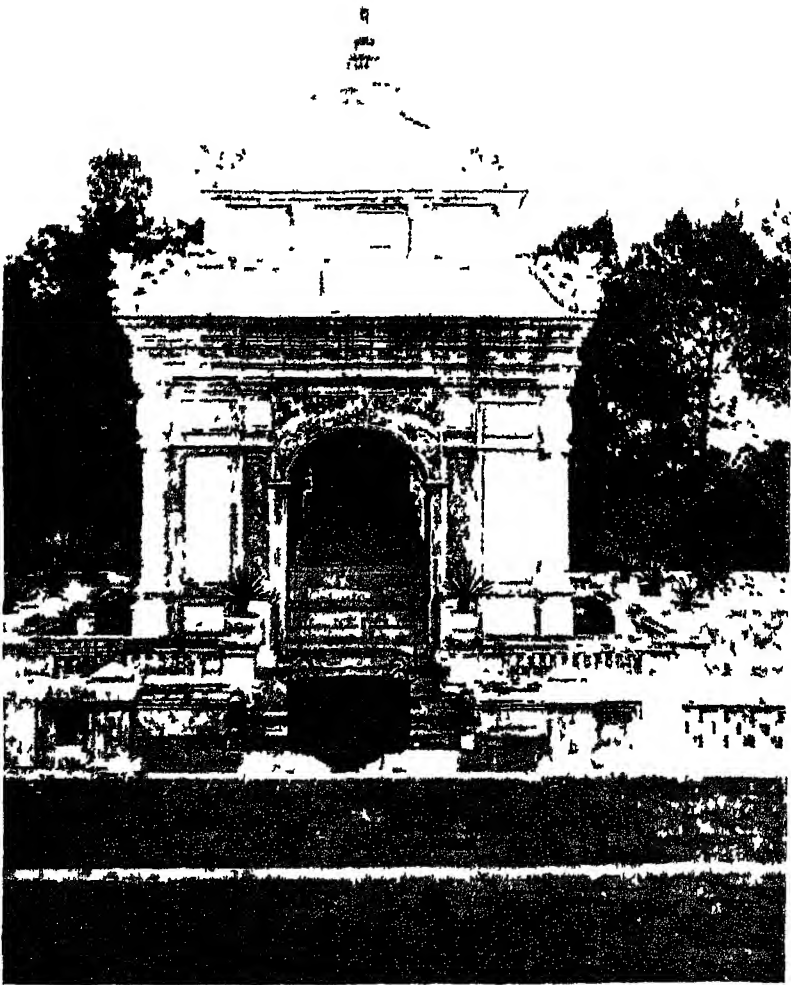
Hither, in the second month of the year, the Emperor comes on the day preceding the ceremony, carried in great state in an open chair, and attended by the whole Court. In Gia Long's days the imperial war elephants took part in the procession, and a continuous hedge of soldiers lined the entire distance from the city. He spends the night fasting and sleeping on the ground, in an adjoining pagoda. At midnight he emerges, and ascends the central platform, now lit up by yellow tapers and containing an altar with yellow and scarlet hangings beneath the tent of blue. The princes and mandarins are disposed in order of rank on the lower terraces. Five times the Emperor draws himself up, kneels, and touches the ground with his fore-

head, making obeisance to heaven on behalf of his people; while a young buffalo, specially reared for this sacred purpose, is immolated and burned upon an adjoining pyre. The ceremony over, the King returns to the palace amid universal rejoicings.

A little higher up the river, and at no great distance from the bank, stands the now disused arena, in which, after the fashion of Oriental Courts in unreformed days, combats of wild beasts used to be held for the entertainment of the Sovereign. This structure consists of a circular brick wall, 24 feet high, enclosing a space 40 yards in diameter. Two staircases lead up to the top, where a sort of projecting terrace or bastion accommodated the Emperor and his mandarins. There appear to have been no seats for other spectators or for the public; for the top of the wall slopes away from the inner edge down to the outer parapet. An inscribed panel contains the signature of Minh Mang (1820-1841). The main gate for the admission of elephants is a little to the right of the royal stand; and on the opposite side are five low arches leading into cells in the heart of the wall, where the tigers and other beasts were confined, that were to be pitted against the elephants in the combat. In Gia Long's day, before the arena was built, the fights used to take place in prepared spots in the open country; and though it was usually arranged that the elephant should win, yet cases are on record in which peculiarly savage tigers were not disposed of until they had got loose and killed several persons. The last

time that any combat was held in the arena was in 1877, in the reign of Tu Duc, and the place was falling to ruin.

By far the most remarkable, however, of the surroundings of Hué are the tombs of the Emperors of the reigning dynasty, from Gia Long to Dong Khanh, which are situated over an area about twelve miles in length to the south-west of the capital, in wooded valleys on either bank of the river. With the resuscitation of the dynasty and the revival of a truly imperial state, Gia Long conceived the idea of providing for himself and successors a number of sepulchres that should vie in magnificence with those of the Ming and Manchu sovereigns of China, and should yet possess characteristics peculiarly their own. These the exquisite Annamite landscape, with its wealth of forested hill and running water, and the co-operation and taste of the French officers in his service, conjointly enabled him to assure; for though no positive evidence to that effect is forthcoming, there can be little doubt, from the disposition of lake and garden, so un-Oriental in character, that he must have seen plans of French gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—of Fontainebleau, and Versailles. Accordingly, thanks to this happy mixture of Oriental stateliness of design with the detailed graces of landscape gardening as elaborated in the West, the mausoleums of Annamite sovereignty are worthy of comparison with any royal tombs in the world. With the accession of Tu Duc, and the decay of French influence, a more strictly native style was pursued; and the tombs of that



*Tomb of Emperor Huai*

TOMBS OF THE EMPERORS III 1



monarch and Dong Khanh have in them nothing of the French.

The plans of these sepulchres were usually drawn by the sovereigns for whom they were destined, but were not invariably executed during their lifetime. Gia Long built his own, as also did Tu Duc ; but the tombs of Minh Mang and Thien Tri were raised by their successors. From fifteen to twenty thousand persons were employed in levelling, terracing, excavating, and building—metamorphosing, in fact, the entire face of Nature, to suit the caprice of the royal architect. The scheme of the earlier of these structures is twofold, consisting primarily of a pleasure garden, with lakes and ponds and summer-houses, where the Emperor could retire for recreation in the summer heats, and where a Memorial Hall or Sanctuary received the furniture of his private apartments, his wardrobe, the altar containing his inscribed tablet, and his principal surviving wives, after his death ; and secondarily, of a vast enclosure, usually constructed in successive terraces, rising from the banks of serpentine ponds, and culminating either in a timbered mound or in a walled *enceinte*, wherein some secret nook, known to none but a select few, conceals the royal corpse. Every year the reigning Emperor must visit each of these tombs, offer the prescribed sacrifices, and perform his *lais* to the *manes* of his ancestors. The inhabitants of the villages where the custodians reside are exempt from taxation. Everything is maintained at the royal expense ; and an inventory had lately been made of the valuable objects deposited in the various sanc-



tuaries, so as to guard against the pilfering which was previously very common ; the most shameless robber having been the last Emperor himself, who stripped all the other shrines to decorate that which he was erecting to his own father ; though the latter, not being of royal blood, and never having reigned, was not entitled, according to Annamite observance, to any such honourable sepulture. Most of the pines have been artificially planted with seeds brought from China ;<sup>1</sup> but there are also on the hill-sides masses of banyans, frangipani, magnolia, rhododendrons, camelias, and palms—forming a gracious fusion of the landscape of Hampshire with that of the Tropics. In some places hills have been built up or artificially scarped, as at the King's Mountain, to furnish the symbolism of a natural screen, and the site of most of the tombs is indicated by two prodigious columns or obelisks, terminating in carved lotus-buds, and emerging from a sea of green. When the Emperor dies, his body, deposited on a prodigious *catafalque* of red and gold, is towed up the river on a specially constructed barge. Thence it is laboriously carried, shoulder high, by from a hundred and fifty to two hundred men, who have been carefully trained for weeks by carrying big jars of water on their shoulders so as not to spill a single drop ; the smallest deviation from the horizontal being an insult to the royal dead. Thus the Emperor Dong Khanh was borne to rest on a day of fiery heat up a steep and unequal mountain valley,

<sup>1</sup> No one in Annam, except the Royal Family, is permitted to plant trees round the tombs.

the exertion telling so severely upon his hundred and eighty bearers that several of them died from the strain.

The various tombs are situated in the chronological order of their occupants, the farthest away from Hué being that of Gia Long, which, in most respects, set the model to his successors. A walk of half an hour from the river bank along a broad path through pine woods terminates in a serpentine pond, above which, side by side, rise the Memorial Hall and its terraces, and the sepulchre with its terraces. Two courts precede the former, the upper of these having open pavilions with altars and sleeping platforms for guards on either side, and the sanctuary at the farther extremity. This building contains the personal belongings and furniture of the Sovereign—the theory being that everything used by him becomes sacred after his death. Its interior disposition is almost exactly the same as that of the private audience chamber in which I had been received by the reigning Emperor. Outer doors or bamboo blinds face the court; behind these is a vestibule consisting of a central and two side aisles, with elaborately carved rafters and panels in the ceiling. In this stands the outer altar of red lacquer emblazoned with gold dragons. A second arrangement of doors or screens veils the inner sanctuary, in the middle of which stands a second altar with censers. Behind it are a number of tables containing the objects in daily use by the deceased—viz. teacups and saucers, chiselled betel and tobacco boxes of silver and gold, his pillow and quilt, and

many articles of raiment. Every morning an offering of food is renewed, in case the illustrious spirit should care to partake. In the centre at the back is the imperial altar (not unlike the shrines of the Shoguns at Tokio and Nikko in Japan) concealed behind silken curtains. It is invariably of red and gold, elaborately carved, and contains the tablet of the deceased, with his name and the date of his birth and death. Chinese lanterns hang from the ceiling, and brackets upon the pillars and lacquered stands support Sèvres vases and Chinese curios in glass cases. Gia Long's sanctuary has been rifled of most of its contents, and was never added to, at his own command, after his death.

From the same pond the royal sepulchre rises in seven paved terraces, enclosed by a low wall. On the lowest of these the images of an elephant, a horse, and five courtiers, carved in stone, stand upon either side—a conscious imitation of the Avenue of Animals that leads to the Chinese tombs of the Mings. Above the uppermost terrace is a wall with a barred iron door in the middle, giving access to three concentric horseshoe enclosures, each surrounded by high walls, and the innermost containing two simple pedimented sarcophagi of stone, which are supposed to contain the bodies of the Emperor and his principal Queen. Right opposite, on the other side of the pond, is a wooded island with two big obelisks, and in the far distance the natural mountain has been scarped to provide the symbolic screen. Upon adjoining terraces, and amid similar surroundings, are disposed the tombs and sanctuaries of Gia

Long's second wife and of his mother. The general conception of the entire group is more spacious, and contains less of the bizarre than the structures of some of his successors.

Of these, perhaps, the tomb of Minh Mang is, on the whole, the most imposing. Its ground-plan differs from the rest, the sanctuary and the sepulchre being placed in the same straight line, instead of detached or side by side. On one of the terraces is a pagoda, containing an object that is also visible at the remaining tombs—viz. a stone stele, covered with an inscription relating the history of the deceased. From the corner of the Memorial Hall, which contains a few fine enamels and bronzes, emerged a shrivelled old beldame in a green turban, a black tunic and white pantaloons, who announced herself as one of the former wives of Minh Mang. She had had over half a century of widowhood, and was seventy years of age; nor had she ever left this spot since the death of her husband. It was a novel sensation to tip the widow of an emperor; but I can certify that the gift of a dollar was most gratefully received. The surroundings of the tomb are here peculiarly fine. On one of the terraces is a two-storied pagoda, surrounded by a flower garden, where the King resides; a descent of steps then leads under a magnificent arch of bronze to a lovely pond, sweeping crescent-wise round the base of an immense wooded tumulus, somewhere in the interior of which reposes the body of the monarch.

On the right bank of the river, and nearer to Hué,

with which they are connected by a carriage road recently constructed by the French, are the tombs of Thien Tri, Tu Duc, Dong Khanh's father, and Dong Khanh. Of these the first named, which closely resembles that of Minh Mang, is the finest, and perhaps the best preserved of any. The Memorial Hall is as richly stored with treasures as a museum, and contains some beautiful vessels of Peking *cloisonné*, of Annamite enamel, and of bronze. Enormous labour has been bestowed on the fashioning of the lakes and the landscape gardening; and Europe certainly contains no mausoleum that can be compared with it for combined majesty and beauty. The later tombs are less grandiose in design, and much more grotesque in execution, resembling the architecture of Annamite temples in general, though on a larger scale. In Tu Duc's enclosure lived one of his wives; and in Dong Khanh's Memorial Hall there were brought up to me to be caressed the two little black-eyed, black-haired boys whom the young Emperor left behind him.

One of them has since been permitted to ascend a throne that has now lost all its gilding. My poor friend Thanh Thai continued to reign till 1907, when, having persevered in the excesses, of which I have indicated the premonitory symptoms, he was deposed by the French and sent to Cochin China. He was succeeded by his son, Duy Tan, who, going one better than his father, made an ineffectual attempt at revolt in 1916, which caused him to be banished along with his parent to Réunion. Thereupon the little boy whom I saw in the mausoleum,

and whose name was Khai Dinh, was brought out from his seclusion, and placed at the age of thirty upon the throne. His conduct had been sufficiently good to justify his being brought to Paris and treated as a State guest in 1922.



## FAR EASTERN CLOISTERS





## I

### THE DRUM MOUNTAIN

Tired of himself, man flies from man  
And hates the world he made so bad.

W. WHITEHEAD, *In a Hermitage.*

ABOUT half-way between Shanghai and Hongkong is the well-known Treaty Port of Foochow, placed, like so many of the big Chinese emporia, not upon the sea-coast but at a distance of some miles from the mouth of a noble and easily navigable river. Of such a character is the Min, bringing down to Foochow the immense resources of a prolific interior, and transporting them thence to the ocean through thirty miles of hill and wood and water scenery as noble as can anywhere be seen. As the traveller enters upon the last ten miles of this approach, he sees upon his right a ridge of hills even loftier and more striking than those that command the ocean gateway lower down, and have caused that entrance to be compared to the castellated banks of the Rhine. The apex of this ridge, which is nearly three thousand feet high, and can be seen for many miles away at sea, is known as Ku-shan, or the Drum Mountain; and the traveller may step from his boat

at the base to make the ascent to the celebrated monastery that bears that name.

The Min is a river of many wanderings, and the flat lands on either side of the main channel are a network of creeks and ditches, some natural and some artificial. These afford the most obvious advantages to spade husbandry, which has accordingly utilised every available rood of ground for paddy-fields. The rice harvest was being gathered in as I passed over the low-lying ground between the river and the hill, and the short stubble projected everywhere in trim diagrams above the saturated soil. In the open fields may be noticed what is probably the most primitive mode of threshing now in existence, viz. the simple beating of a handful of rice stalks against the inner side of a large wooden bin, into the bottom of which tumbled the dislodged grains. A miserable village, the like of which for sheer squalor I had not seen since the mud hovels that fringe the banks of the Nile, sheltered the poor folk who live upon the produce of the land. Blind walls of wattled clay, narrow filth-encumbered alleys, wizened old beldames, naked urchins, barking, mangy dogs, and a general atmosphere of flies and smells, made up the due complement of rural life, as it may be seen in a hundred places all over the East.

A little beyond the village began the ascent of the mountain, which is easily compassed by a broad granite stairway of some six feet in width, the slope of the steps being so easy and the surface of the granite so smooth from long friction that it is diffi-



*Exclusive News Agency.*

FOOCHOW



cult for a booted sole to keep its footing. The natives with their naked feet dash up and down at a great pace. This fine staircase continues to wind up the mountain side, affording many a backward peep through the pine stems over the watery plain, as far as the elongated brown blur which marks the straggling outline of Foochow. You pass under three spacious rest-houses, considerably erected by the monks, and are struck by the bold inscriptions in Chinese characters, sculpted on the face of the big stones and boulders which fringe the path. Here will be the name and address of a devout pilgrim (John Chinaman is at one in this taste with John Bull), a second inscription will contain some eulogium on the scenery, a third may be a quotation from the Sutras or Buddhist Scriptures.

At length, after about an hour's climb, you turn a corner, and in a charming valley, snugly ensconced between two shoulders of the mountain, at a height of 1500 feet, you espy the conventual buildings. I have been struck in many parts of the world with the cleverness in selecting sites shown by the monastic fraternity. Banish them to a mountain or a desert, and in its heart they will discover, or, failing that, they will manufacture, some secluded nook or oasis. Their aim is a combination of asceticism with material comfort, a discreet reconciliation of the asperities of penance with the amenities of civilised life; objects (as regards the choice of sites) which do not seem to have been altogether ignored by their later rivals among the Christian missions of China and Japan. The same reflection presents

itself in the case of the pleasant Greek monastery amid the flowers and shrubs of Mount Tabor, in that of the Benedictine monastery on the pyramidal cones of Monserrat, near Barcelona—a situation closely analogous to that of Ku-shan—and even of the more exposed and desolate Coptic domiciles upon the arid cliffs of the Nile.

Of course, so rationalistic and profane an explanation is in direct conflict with the assurances of local legend. From this source we learn that the site of the present monastery was once infested by poisonous dragons and snakes, who spread havoc, pestilence, and destruction far over the countryside. At length a distinguished sage named Ling Chian was imported to put a stop to these proceedings, much as a Bishop of the Church of England might nowadays be invited to a haunted house to exorcise the ghost. He came, recited a treatise of portentous length, and conquered. The serpent, unaccustomed to this severe discipline, and tired out before the divine reached the end of his sermon, beat a prudent retreat; and a grateful Emperor commemorated the joyful event by the erection of a monastery on the spot. This was in the year A.D. 784; and the present building is the lineal descendant of others that have stood in the same place, and have at different times been pulled down or destroyed.

The first object after entering a gateway is a rest-house upon the right, which overlooks the sluggish waters of a big tank. The meaning of this pool is not at first obvious; but the appearance of a dirty-looking monk with a plate of biscuit, who

grimaces and murmurs "Chin-chin," acquaints you with the fact that you are surveying the abode of the sacred fish, and are expected to minister to their pampered appetites.

Judging from the prodigious size of these creatures the majority of pilgrims must accede to the appeal. They are fat, evil-looking carp who, at the first sign of an adventitious repast, crowd together, poking their ugly snouts out of the water, and sucking in the air with gluttonous expectancy. They are kept there in pursuance of the maxim of Buddha that each man shall do what in him lies to prevent the destruction of a single living creature, a precept which seems in this case to be extended to the duty of promoting an unnatural overgrowth.

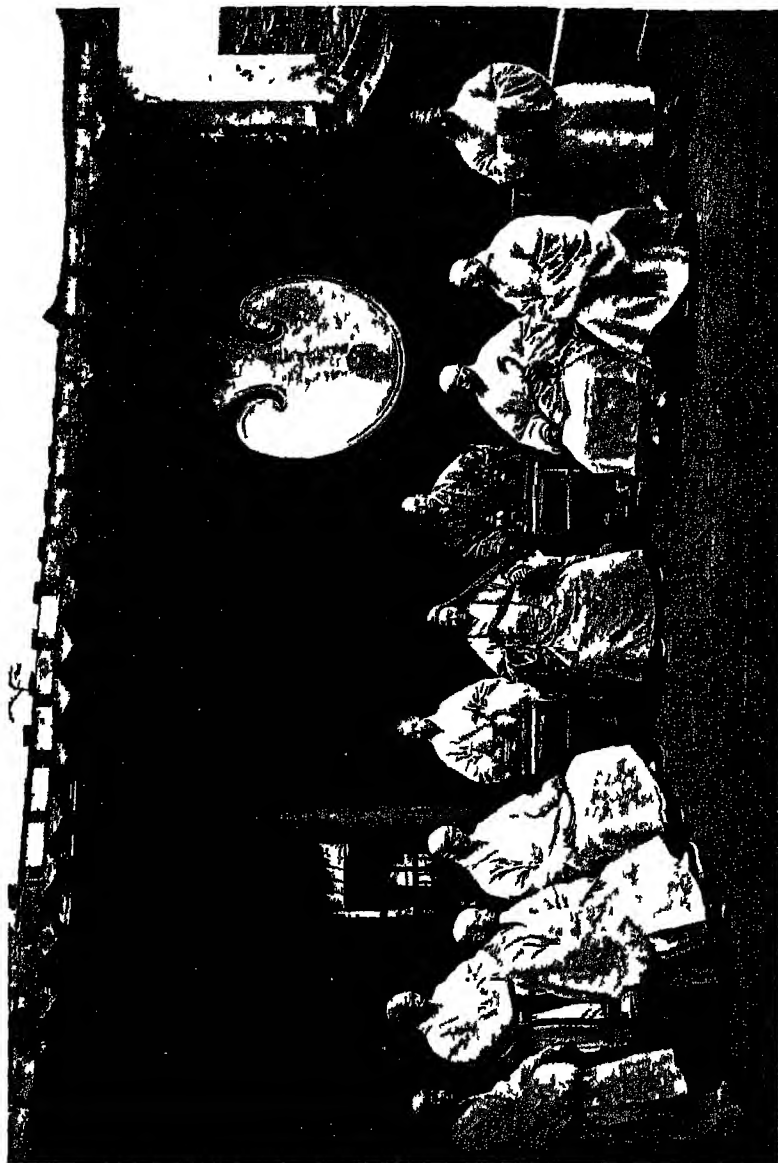
From the sacred tank we pass by an inclined granite ramp to the main gateway of the temple, which contains a colossal gilt idol in the centre, representing Maitreya Buddha (in Chinese Mili Fo) or Buddha To Come; and on either side the four diabolical-looking monsters, with painted faces and flaming eyeballs, who represent the deified warriors appointed to keep guard over the shrines of Buddha, and who symbolise an absolute command over all the forces of earth and heaven. They are identical with the Maharajas, or Great Kings, of Hindu mythology, who, attended by a host of spiritual beings, march hither and thither to the protection of devout disciples and the execution of Buddha's will over the four quarters of the universe. In China they are known as the Tien Wong. One of them, with a white face, holds an umbrella, the circumference of



which, when opened, overshadows the whole earth, and is lord of the forces of thunder and rain. Another, with a red face, controls the elements of fire, water, and air, and plays a species of stringed instruments, the vibrations of whose chords shake the foundations of the world. The third, with a green face, brandishing a sword, and the fourth, with a blue face, clasping a serpent, are typical of supreme dominion over nature and man. In these figures, which are common throughout China, and are uniform in design and monstrosity, the artist has combined the hideous and the grotesque in very equal proportions. But little skill seems ever to have been expended upon their construction.

This gateway leads into a spacious paved court with a little pool in the centre, crossed by a miniature balustraded stone bridge. A raised terrace runs right round, opening into a series of crumbling shrines, many of which are empty, though a few contain tarnished Buddhas seated behind smouldering altar-fires. At the upper end the terrace debouches on to a broad platform, from which rises the fabric of the main temple. The exterior appearance of this building does not differ from that of the ordinary Chinese temple. A huge high-pitched tile roof almost eclipses the front and side walls, which are destitute of ornamentation. The doors across the principal entrance were drawn close; but the hum of voices behind the panels revealed the fact that vespers had already begun. I went in.

Services are held twice a day in the Ku-shan



THE ABBOT AND MONKS OF THE BUDDHIST MONASTERY AT KU SHAN

Exhibition No. 1, 1901



monastery—in the early morning before day breaks, and at 4.30 in the afternoon, and they last for about one hour. All the monks in residence are required to attend. The fact that there were only fifty present on this occasion, out of a total of some hundred and fifty, may have been due to the absence of a large number on a tour of mendicancy, or to the custom which prevails among these Buddhist communities of making pilgrimages to each other; any monk furnished with a diploma signed by his own abbot being entitled to free admission into any other monastery in the Empire and to three days' board and lodging without payment.

The temple did not appear to differ from scores of others which one may see in China. It consists of a big parallelogram divided by circular painted columns into three main, and two side aisles. Fronting the three principal avenues are the three familiar figures, about twenty feet high, called the Sang Po, or Precious Ones, which are always found in the churches of Buddhist monasteries, and which are incarnations respectively of the past, the present, and the future Buddha; or, to give them their correct titles, of Sakya-muni, Kwanyin, and Maitreya.<sup>1</sup> These idols are made of clay, thickly gilt, and highly burnished. Their faces wear that expression of ineffable self-complacency which is common to the Buddha all over the East, but

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, in the main hall of Buddhist temples in China, this trinity represents Sakya-muni in the centre, with two of his most famous disciples, Kashiapa, the first patriarch, on one side, and Ananda, the second patriarch, on the other.

which, while in Japan it is always sublime, in China is apt to become grotesque. The bodies are seated, and rise from the calix of a lotus-flower. Below the images are altars laden with weighty bronzes, with big candelabra and with censers, a thin smoke curling upwards from the slow combustion of blocks of sandal-wood, or from sheaves of smouldering joss-sticks standing in a vase. On either side of the lateral aisles are ranged along a recess in the wall the smaller gilt figures of the Eighteen Lohan, or Disciples of Buddha, whose features exaggerate the silliness, while they altogether miss the serenity depicted in the countenance of their illustrious master. The prevailing colours in the surface decorations of the columns and rafters, which were rudely painted, are red and green. The ceiling is more elaborately decorated in panels, the design and execution of which reminded me wonderfully of the roof of the Norman nave of Peterborough Cathedral. There was nothing else in the decoration to merit comparison with any good models either in or out of China.

Evensong was proceeding as I entered the church. The aisles were laid out with rows of long, low, sloping stools, upon which at intervals rested circular straw hassocks. Behind fifty of these—the remainder being unoccupied—stood the monks intoning the words of the prescribed liturgy. The service was led by one of their number, who officiated at an isolated mat before the great altar. Their dresses were cut after one pattern, and were dingy in the extreme, consisting of loose cotton robes of two

colours—yellow and an ashen-grey—with turned-down collars, and a clasp in front. No monk is allowed, according to the strict regulation of the Canon, to possess more than one set of garments, and this he is compelled to wear both day and night. Their heads were clean shaven, a ceremonial which is performed about twice a month. Here and there on the bald craniums one might note small disc-like cicatrices, or scars, burnt in by the hand of the abbot alone, as a badge of the sacred calling, or in fulfilment of some particular vow. Their hands were piously folded in front of them, and the nails had been suffered to grow to an inordinate length. The expression of their faces was one of blank and idiotic absorption. One or two barely raised their eyes to notice the entrance of the strangers; the most part with bent heads continued their monotonous and droning murmur.

I have called the expression of their features idiotic; and indeed it is not surprising, considering that of the words which they daily intone scarcely one syllable do they themselves understand. The mass-book is a dead letter to them, for it is written in Sanskrit or Pali, which they can no more decipher than fly. The words that they chant are merely the equivalent in sound of the original sentences, rendered into Chinese characters, and are therefore totally devoid of sense. To this stale shibboleth, or ignorant repetition of unmeaning sounds, they attribute a vital importance. It is, they point out, the sacred language of Fan (the birthplace of Buddha), and is therefore of divine origin and efficacy.

The murmur of the chant was accompanied by intermittent music from such instruments as the *Oriental loves*. An acolyte from time to time struck a drum, the framework of which was of wood, carved and painted to represent a huge pot-bellied fish. Another tinkled a bell in the background ; and now and then broke in the dissonant clangour of a gong.

After a while a fresh note was struck ; and at the signal the priests separated into two companies, and proceeded for the space of some twenty minutes to wind in and out of the lines of stools in a slow and solemn procession. Backwards and forwards, in and out, with measured tread and even steps they paced along, their hands clasped, their heads bowed, their lips still murmuring the same unintelligible refrain, in which might be distinguished the sounds *Om* *to* *Fo* (*Amitabha Buddha*), the repetition of which many thousands of times is pregnant with salvation. The leader of the company which marched along before the spot where I was standing was an old gentleman, presumably the *Tae Hoshang* or Abbot. His physiognomy was one of striking peculiarity ; a retreating forehead, features that expressed only a sort of vacant and chaotic negation ; a mouth tightly shut and imperturbable in its fixity ; a lower lip projecting the best part of an inch, and bespeaking self-sufficiency, reserve, and scorn. He carried a rosary of beads in his fingers, the mystic number of one hundred and eight that were strung upon it indicating the one hundred and eight divisions of the sacred footprint of Buddha ; and as

he passed along he told off one after the other with the regularity of a machine.

What with the rosary, the procession, the incense, the images, nay, the very vestments and cowls and tonsures of the monks, one was irresistibly reminded of the Romanist ritual of Europe. But a slight change was needed in the *mise en scène*, and the service might have been enacted many a thousand miles nearer home.

Nor is the coincidence merely superficial. The very character and *raison d'être* of the Buddhist priesthood, their hierarchy of many grades (particularly in Tibet), their vows of celibacy and diet, their monastic life, their fast days and feast days, their masses and litanies for the living, their requiems for the dead, betray a fundamental analogy which is not lightly to be attributed to chance, but which is one among many indications of that common basis to both the forms and the dogmas of all the higher religions, which is especially forced upon the conviction by a study of the systems of the East. So strong indeed is the resemblance between the Buddhist and the Romanist form of worship in these and in further particulars which I cannot here describe, that the friends and the foes of the latter have been sorely puzzled how to account for its origin. The former, with spacious disregard for historical data, have suggested that the Buddhists copied from the Catholics, who are known to have entered China as early as the twelfth century. On the other hand, some audacious Pagans have been found to assert that the obligation was the other way about. The



Catholic fathers themselves, when first they came to China, were so much perplexed at the resemblance that they could only attribute it to the machinations of the devil, who had been beforehand with them in spreading a spurious imitation to the cruel detriment and scandal of the true faith.

Leaving the monks at their peripatetic devotion, I stepped outside and investigated the remainder of the premises. The third temple, standing on another terrace at the upper end of a second paved quadrangle, was under repair, and I could not enter. In cognate Buddhist institutions, and in the great monastery of Honam, in Canton, it contains a marble *doghoba*, or sculptured reliquary, with altars and shrines. Somewhere in one of these temples at Ku-shan, probably here, is concealed a peculiarly sacred object, which is no less than one of the teeth of Buddha. Judging from the trophies of this description which he left behind him, the saint must have been a great patron of dentistry in his time. A Chinese geographer visiting Ceylon, and somewhat staggered by the number of these relics which he was everywhere shown, solemnly remarked of the prophet, "He was born with an excessive number of teeth."

I next inspected the domestic premises, which are congregated in the rear and at the sides of the temples. Here I was shown the kitchen, in which a vast mess of rice was being boiled in an earthenware vat for the evening meal; the refectory, where on hard tables and harder benches it would be consumed in silence under the supervision of the Abbot;

the guest-chambers, reserved for the not too enervating entertainment of guests ; and the sleeping apartments beyond these, which could not, save by a euphemism, be so leniently described. All these buildings were in a state of great shabbiness and decay, and the interior economy was not such as to render one envious of the domestic regimen of Ku-shan.

On one side, approached by a corridor, was an open pen, in which are kept the sacred animals who divide the monopoly of the good things of life at Ku-shan with the fat carp in the tank. It contained a number of pigs, ducks, geese, and fowls, who presented a comfortable appearance, and might have taught a lesson in point of condition and sprightliness to their seedy custodians. Some of these animals are kept by the monastery in obedience to the precept which I have previously quoted ; others have been placed here by pious persons in fulfilment of a vow, and in such cases are sustained by the periodical contributions of their donors, paid either in cash or in grain. Upon the death of the creature a formal notification is sent to the patron, and the obsequies are decently performed. Should a fowl when in confinement commit the indiscretion of laying an egg, a compromise between the inconvenient perpetuation and the prohibited destruction of the species is arrived at by burying the cause of offence in the ground.

The bodies of the monks themselves are burned and not buried after death. Contrary to the custom in Japan, where cremation is universal among the

common people, in China it is only the prerogative or the peculiarity of the religious order. Each monastery contains its *crematorium* and its *campo santo*, where are deposited the ashes of the dead. The body is placed in a sitting position in an open plank coffin, and is carried out to the furnace, which is of the simplest description, consisting merely of a small brick chamber or tower, standing by itself in a detached situation. There the corpse is placed upon the ground, surrounded and supported by faggots; the attendant monks intone a chant; and the mortal remains of their departed brother are speedily reduced to ashes, while the smoke from the pyre escapes through a single orifice in the roof. At Honam some little urchins very considerably, but with no great reverence, went through a mimicry of the entire performance for my edification, their gestures exactly corresponding with what I had elsewhere heard and read of the ceremony.

Those who mount to the monastery at Ku-shan and make at all a minute inspection of its interior are usually too lazy to continue their climb to the summit of the mountain. The height to be surmounted is nearly as much again, and is besides much steeper and stonier of ascent; there being no staircase provided for the wayfarer, who has now ceased to be a pilgrim and become a mere pedestrian. Nevertheless it is an element of the excursion which no one should omit; the view from the summit, which is just short of 3000 feet, being one of exceeding amplitude and magnificence. Under the guidance of an athletic monk I made the ascent with as

much speed as possible, having lingered so long, first at the service, and then about the conventual precincts, that the sun was already declining behind the amphitheatre of hills as we started through the cultivated plots that provide occupation and lawful sustenance to the holy brethren, and pushed our way up the steep face of the hill. At about 800 feet above the monastery the track passes out of the belt of pinewood which has hitherto clothed the mountain, and the upper parts are rocky, treeless, and covered with a coarse grass. When I stood upon the highest point, the sun had only so recently sunk that the embers of the dying flame were still aglow in the west, but already the moon, nearly at the full, was riding high in the opposite sky.

The outlook was a wild and weird one; embracing many a mile of tumbled landscape from the indented and island-strewn line of the coast to the distant barriers of the Tiger Mountains. A hundred peaks of different shapes and heights framed the horizon landwards. Between the two ranges of mountains, that fronting the sea and that towards the interior, the valley of the Min was spread out in a misty expanse of gleaming, watery flats. The great coils of the river wound round the plain and distributed themselves over its surface in streamlets and creeks and feeders, till it looked from above as though the veins and arteries of some gigantic organism had been stripped and laid bare. Southward the big vessels riding at the anchorage ten miles away resembled toy ships on a river of silk. To the north, where lay the city, the lights of the

European residences twinkled on the island of Nantai ; a mist of fireflies seemed to hover where the lanterns flickered on the mast-heads of a thousand junks ; and the forty piers of the Bridge of the Ten Thousand Ages were successive spots of blackness upon the frosted mirror of the stream. Not a sound could be heard from the great city ; but the faint resonance of a monastic bell lower down the slope interposed its reminder that it was time to be making the descent of Ku-shan.

## II

### IN THE DIAMOND MOUNTAINS

Where every prospect pleases  
And only man is vile.

BISHOP HEBER.

Desperatio facit monachum.

BURTON, *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

IN the course of my travels, as this book will have shown, I have come across a good many monks and monkish communities, and have spent nights of interest, though hardly of luxury, and not always of repose, in monastic guest-chambers or cells. I have walked in pilgrimage round the pyramidal spires of Monserrat, have been hauled up in a net like a trussed quail to the eyries of Meteora, have dined with the Abbot of the great monastery of Troitsa near Moscow, have fraternised with the dwindling Greek fraternities of Athos, and with the more prosperous Russians on Tabor, have sojourned in the grim monastery of Mar Saba near the Dead Sea, was once rescued with difficulty, and only by the tact and *savoir-faire* of my companion, Sir John Jordan, from the menacing approaches of the Lamas in the Great Tibetan Monastery at Peking, have addressed an audience of two thousand yellow-robed

Burmese monks at Mandalay, and have slept at night on the polished temple floors of the monasteries of Korea.

I shrink, even after this rather diversified experience, from generalising about monks, since I have found them divided, like other classes of mankind, between saints and profligates, *bon-vivants* and ascetics, gentlemen and vagabonds, men of education and illiterate boors. But of all my monastic adventures I think that the ones which linger longest in my memory are the days that I spent with my friend, the late Cecil Spring Rice, afterwards British Ambassador at Washington, in wandering among the monasteries of Eastern Korea. And the reasons for my preference are these. First, the scenery amid which these monastic retreats are hidden is among the most enchanting in the East. Indeed, it may fairly be described as one of the unknown beauty-spots of the world. Secondly, there was not the faintest masquerade of piety among the great majority of these rather seedy scamps, some of whom were *quondam* criminals of the deepest dye; and this invested them with an originality, which, if not admirable, was at least piquant. And, thirdly, I had the supreme satisfaction of arresting an Abbot, and carrying him off, a captive of my bow and spear.

Doubtless other European travellers after my day have threaded the picturesque gorges of the Diamond Mountains; and, for all I know, since the vacuum cleaner of Japanese rule has sucked out the dust and dirt from the crannies and corners of

the dilapidated old Korean tenement, the monasteries may by now have been expurgated, and the monks made respectable, and a road for motor-cars driven to the threshold of the Keum Kang San. But as I was one of the earliest Europeans to visit those exquisite retreats, now more than thirty-two years ago (October 1892), it may be worth while to set down a few of my memories of the scene as it was in those unregenerate days of mingled rascality and romance.

In my book on Korea <sup>1</sup> I described the incidents and features of travel as I saw them in that singularly backward and unsophisticated country—the little sturdy combative ponies, the garrulous, quarrelsome lazy pony-men or *mapus*, the indolent strong-limbed people, the picturesque variety of scenery, the perfect climate, the abundance of winged game, the torch-lit marches at night, the total absence of roads, the incredibly disgusting native inns.

It was amid such surroundings that my acquaintance with the Korean cloister was made. We were marching from Gensan or Wonsan, a port on the eastern coast, to the capital, Söul, a distance of 170 miles, but we deviated from the familiar track (where there is now a railway) to visit the monasteries to the east of the road. It was soon after passing Namsan, fifteen miles from Gensan, that we left the plain, and plunged into the interior of a wooded range, the crimson of whose autumnal maples and chestnuts burned like a dying flame against the sky. Our destination was the monastery

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of the Far East* (new and revised edition), 1896.



of Syek-wang Sa, the chief or metropolitan monastic establishment in Korea, founded about 500 years ago, which I have not seen mentioned in the itinerary of other travellers. The bridlepath—for no road in Korea at that time was any more or better—followed the windings of a sylvan glen, down which brawled a mountain stream. On either side were rocks on whose chiselled surface centuries of pilgrims had inscribed their names in bold Chinese characters. In turn we passed the cemetery of the monks, marked by lantern-like pillars of stone, heavily eaved rest-houses built for visitors, and a series of hideous painted wooden posts, terminating in a grinning head erected to ward off the assault of evil spirits.<sup>1</sup> So we came, as the track broadened, to a hollowed amphitheatre, which seemed to have been scooped out for the purpose in the hill-side, where on terrace above terrace stood the monastic buildings.

It was near midnight when we arrived and presented our letters of introduction to the Abbot. He showed us our quarters, and there we cooked and ate our meal, before the whole company of monks, in an atmosphere which might have been cut with a knife, not getting to bed till two in the morning. Our sleep was on a floor stretched with oiled paper, as smooth and shining as marble; in the middle stood an altar and a Buddha behind glass. Daylight had not dawned before we were aroused by the peripatetic tramp of an early monk, tapping a drum and singing a lugubrious chant. Another began to

<sup>1</sup> The theory is that all nature is pervaded by spirits and genii, who require to be propitiated and, when malevolent, to be kept aloof.

clap-clap upon a brass gong. Presently the big drum on the platform over the entrance was beaten to a noisy tune ; and finally every bell and gong in the establishment was set going at once. We rose and dressed before an appreciative crowd, who took an overpowering interest in our equipment, and more particularly in our sponges and binoculars.

Then the worthy Abbot appeared, robed in a grey dress, wearing a black circular horse-hair hat, and holding a staff in his hand, to conduct us round. His tiny eyes twinkled with good-humoured benevolence ; a grey stubble sprouted from his unshaven cheeks and chin ; his big lips poured forth a voluble flood in an unknown tongue.

One temple at the side contained a hideous painted wooden Buddha. A cluster of buildings to the left of the entrance, terminating in a prayer platform that overhung the torrent, was said to be reserved for the King. In the side courts of the enclosure, looking like a collection of little dolls with hoods, were the upper parts of the painted stone figures of 500 Lohans or Arhans, *i.e.* disciples of Buddha who were supposed to have framed the Sacred Canon with him in India. These images had a grotesque leer upon their whitened faces. As we left at 8.30 A.M., the good Abbot accompanied us to the gateway, and when I offered him the paltry gratuity of one *yen* for the night's hospitality—which I thought very shabby, but had been enjoined at Gensan on no account to exceed—he looked at the coin with an air of pained reproach, and murmured “ Couldn't you make it two ? ” It

was impossible to resist this pathetic appeal, my prompt response to which made him quite happy, and left me with the agreeable conviction that human nature is much the same all the world over, whether it be manifested in a London cab-driver or a Korean abbot. Anyhow, this excellent man stands forth in my memory as the pleasantest and most human of all the holy friars whom I was to see during the next few days of my wanderings.

It was on the afternoon of the next day but one that, leaving the main Gensan—Söul track beyond Hoi-yang, we struck off eastwards for our goal in the Diamond Mountains. The night was spent in the native village of Sin-ha-chang, where a rustic bridge of sticks and shrubs, whose unstripped autumnal verdure made a ruddy projecting fringe on either side, spanned a mountain stream. On the next day we climbed a pass, a small shrine or joss-house at the top of which contained, amid a lot of fluttering and filthy rags—the offerings of generations of pilgrims—two pictures, said to be those of the King with two boys, and the Queen with two girls. But this was not the real interest. Before us lay a view not unlike but more beautiful than the wild outlook in the Matoppo Hills as you climb to Cecil Rhodes' burial-place in South Africa. Four successive ridges, like the palisades of some huge mountain fortress, the walls of each stained crimson with the heart's blood of the dying maple, filled the foreground. Each must be climbed and each descended before the splendid barrier of the Keum Kang San or Diamond Mountains, fifth in the

sequence, was reached.<sup>1</sup> It could be seen, standing up beyond and higher than its outer barricades, thickly mantled up to its shoulders, above which a battlement of splintered crags cut a fretwork pattern against the sky. Redder and more red glowed the wooded slopes as the sun declined, and an ashen pallor flickered on the granite boulders and needle-spires. The last valley-bottom was crossed, the last river rushing down it in a rock-strewn bed was forded, the main range, in its livery of crimson and gold, was now in front of us. A lovely walk through a piney glade, past monastic rest-houses, and under the scarlet archway of the Hong Sal Mun, or Red Arrow Gate that is the precursor of all buildings in Korea under Royal patronage, led to a cleared space, where, above the rushing torrent, a cluster of buildings stood with their backs to a wooded hill. These were the halls of the Chang an Sa Monastery, or the Temple of Eternal Rest, the oldest and most famous of the monasteries of the Diamond Mountains.

First is an open terraced gateway, completely hung with tablets recording the names of subscribers, and containing a grotesque wooden monster painted red, green, and white, representing one of the semi-deified heroes or warriors, genii or spirits, who have been added in the passage of time to the Buddhist Pantheon, overlapping it with a mass of

<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain whether the title is metaphorical, or refers to the serrated outline of the peaks, or is derived from the Diamond Sutra, one of the best known of the Buddhist scriptures. The Japanese form of the name is Kongo-San; and they call the monastery of Chang an Sa (the Korean form) Choanji.

demonolatry that has wellnigh obliterated the original faith. A big bell hangs in a sort of wooden pen adjoining. Next we pass through a pillared chamber into the courtyard of the monastery, at the head of which stands the main temple with double-tiered roof of tiles and deep overhanging tip-tilted eaves. The guest-houses are at the side.

In the central hall of the temple a gilded Buddha is seated in the middle on a raised wooden terrace or platform painted red. Above his head is a fantastically carved and painted canopy, and in front of his face is suspended a green gauze veil. Six great wooden pillars, a yard in diameter, formed of single tree-trunks and coloured red, support the roof, which is painted in faded hues of blue and green. At the side of the hall is a painted scene, containing three Buddhas, in front of whom are colossal images of warriors with diabolical faces.

Below the Buddhas, and indeed in front of every Buddhistic image, is a low stool or altar with a copy of the Scriptures and a small brass bell, the indispensable ritual accompaniments of service. On the right of the courtyard stand smaller detached temples, containing other hideous effigies, coloured red, green, and blue, their faces are as a rule painted white, and distorted with a horrible leer. One holds his beard in his hand, another a book, a third a sceptre. Small figures like boys are placed between them, carrying images of animals in their hands. Round are hung paintings on frames. The second largest of these pavilions contains a fine pagoda canopy over the seated Buddha and a single

row of figures seated and standing all round on a raised terrace.

Evensong began soon after our arrival. A young monk pulled a grey robe over his white dress and red hood, knelt on a circular mat, intoned the conventional phrases, not one syllable of which did he understand, struck a brass bell with a deer's horn, and touched his forehead on the ground. The act is one not of prayer, in our sense, but merely of adoration.

We were accommodated in a guest-hall or temple, the floor of which was covered with the famous Korean paper that glistened like worn oil-cloth. We unrolled our bedding at the foot of the altar, whence a miniature Buddha smiled down upon us from a sort of cage. The monks who had exhibited the liveliest interest in our articles of toilet, particularly in combs, nail-scissors, and sponges, none of which had they ever seen, still more in an inflated indiarubber cushion, and most of all in a mouth-plate of false teeth, retired at 7 P.M. and left us to ourselves.

In the morning we saw the pad marks and droppings of a tiger which had entered the courtyard during the night and paced around the closed buildings. Why he had been content to do so little, no one could say. The jungles of Northern Korea abound in these animals, which levy an ample toll on animal and human life (for many are man-eaters), and are pursued by guilds of hunters with primitive weapons or are caught in traps and pits.

Here let me say a few words about the Korean

phase of monastic life, the last resorts of which I am now describing. It was in the early centuries of our Christian era that Buddhism made its way, it is alleged from India, but much more probably from China, into the Korean peninsula. There in time it became not merely the official cult of the royal and ruling classes, but also the popular creed of the people. Royal personages came on tour to the monasteries of the Diamond Mountains, which are said to have numbered 108, and which flourished greatly under this august patronage. For more than a thousand years pilgrims from China and surrounding countries travelled great distances to its altars, cutting their names with infinite labour on the smoothed surfaces of the rocks and boulders in the valley bottoms, where the only track lay in the beds of the mountain streams. Some of these inscriptions date back to the thirteenth century. In brass-bound chests in some of the principal Halls of Worship are still kept books of great value, printed in Chinese characters from wooden blocks over 1000 years old. Then, more than three centuries ago, came the period in which Buddhism, hitherto venerated and popular, was rejected, disestablished, and despised, being persecuted by the Court, whose official creed was Confucianism (no monk was allowed even to enter the gates of the capital, and the priests were degraded to the lowest class of the people), and abandoned by the population, whose barbarism sought refuge in the rudest and crudest forms of demonolatry, Shamanism, and superstition. Some of the monasteries were destroyed by fire;

others fell into decay. The survivors, no longer the haunts of piety and devotion, became pleasure resorts, which were visited by the upper classes for purposes of enjoyment, often of the least reputable kind ; while the monks themselves became the outcasts of society, addicted to lives of combined mendicancy, depravity, and indolence. From this cloud the Korean cloister has never recovered. At the time of my visit its recruits were with few exceptions drawn from the ne'er-do-weels and wastrels of society, refugees from justice, the victims of official persecution, pleasure-seekers of every description, profligates and paupers, destitutes and orphans, any one in fact who wanted a safe retreat and a quiet life. Truthfully one might apply the French proverb—*Près du monastère, à messe le dernier*. Here and there an insignificant minority preserved the traditions or kept alive the spirit of the monastic order.

The seclusion and beauty of these mountain fastnesses at once attracted immigrants and afforded them the necessary protection they required. No people on the earth, certainly none so backward in the scale of civilisation, is so passionately addicted to sight-seeing and pleasure-seeking or so sensitive to the charm of landscape as the Korean. They will travel miles on foot to climb a pass or see a view, celebrating their arrival on the crest by a mild jollification and by the deposit of a stone or the suspension of a rag in the little wayside shrine that crowns the summit, or, if they are sufficiently educated, by the composition of a few lines of doggerel verse.



To a people with such tastes the Diamond Mountains have always appealed with an irresistible fascination. There, in an area only 30 miles long by 20 broad, shut off from the rest of the world, and accessible only by a few mountain passes, are still to be found over forty monasteries, which at the time of my visit were said still to contain from 300 to 400 monks, as well as a small number of nuns,<sup>1</sup> and lay-servitors to the number of a thousand. They subsisted in the main on mendicancy, wandering about the country, alms-bowl in hand, and—such is the simplicity or the superstition of the inhabitants—extracting liberal supplies either for the endowment of their idleness, or the rebuilding and redecoration of their dilapidated shrines. The whole situation was a paradox, whether we contrast the *mise en scène* with the inmates or the professions of monkish life with its practice.

I have described the Keum Kang San as I saw them in the changing hues of autumn, and this is generally regarded as the best season. But I believe that the spectacle in spring, when the valleys and the hills are carpeted with the bright hues of violets and anemones, clematis and azaleas, and above all with lilies of the valley, and when the hill-sides are ablaze with spring foliage and rhododendrons and the wild cherry and flowering shrubs, is not less captivating.

We devoted the day after our arrival at Chang an Sa to a march on foot—for no other method of pro-

<sup>1</sup> In 1914, after the Japanese annexation, the numbers were: monks 448, nuns 85.

gression is possible in those regions except a sort of native chair borne by men—to the neighbouring monasteries of Pakhuam, Pyoun Sa, Potakam, Makayum, Panyang, and Yuchom (or Ujang) Sa.

The march was along the valley bottom, in or alongside of or across the torrent bed, where a foothold can only be secured by wearing the native sandal of twisted string—and these have to be changed every few miles. Pakhuam was a tiny monastery with only three inmates. Pyoun Sa with ten was larger, and had an Abbot, wearing a huge circular hat. Here was a newly painted temple with a portentous drum, the size of a small tun, resting on the back of a monster. There were brilliant paintings on the walls, and a pink gauze veil hung in front of the figures of the Holy One. As we proceeded up stream the surface of the rocks was scarred with the incised names of generations of pilgrims, which it must have taken days if not weeks of time to cut.

Behind Pyoun Sa at the top of the hill (2750 feet) is seen the great view of the "Twelve Thousand Peaks", said to be the grandest in Korea. The title is merely a quantitative symbol; but if each pinnacle and cone and spire in that wonderful outlook were counted, it might be that the total would not be found too high. Potakam is not a place of residence, but an altar to Kwanyin (the Goddess of Mercy) built high up on a ledge to the right of the valley, and supported by iron girders and a cylindrical shaft or pillar of iron. Near Makayum is a colossal image of Buddha known as the Myokil Sang, 40-50

feet high, sculpted in relief on the face of the rock with a small stone altar in front. The right hand of the figure is raised and the fingers of the left are outspread across the breast. The expression of the countenance is placid and serene.

Near Makayum is some of the loveliest scenery in these mountains. Here in a very beautiful ravine, called Manpoktong, or the Grotto of Myriad Cascades, is the Pearl Pool, Chinjutam; a neighbouring peak, with a wonderful outline is Sajapong, the Lion Peak, and a little farther to the north-east are two Manmulsangs, New and Old, which means "Aspect of Myriad things"—the idea being that the fantastic rocks in these areas resemble, as they might well be thought to do, all existing shapes in the world. Were such scenery to be found in Europe, thousands of visitors would pour to it from every part of the Continent.

From here we crossed the watershed by a very steep climb over the Naimuzairyung Pass, 4800 feet above the sea, which is visible from it in clear weather, and descended upon the small monastery of Panyang, and the much larger and recently restored establishment of Yuchom (or Ujang) Sa. A great deal of money had been spent here; and the Abbot and his following, of whom 18 monks and 8 lads happened to be at home (there are said to be 100 monks in all), were on a different plane—both of cleanliness and manners—to their neighbours. Yuchom Sa is now the largest monastery in the Diamond Mountain and comprises no fewer than 22 buildings. The main temple contained a very elaborate carved

and painted erection or iconostasis, with 53 little images of Buddha, each perched on a little stand with a silk cloth below, and framed in a grotesque coloured background, made to represent the roots and branches of a tree twisted with most fantastic convolutions. On either side of this monstrosity were two great fan-shaped bouquets of scarlet and white flowers. A nine-storied stone pillar or pagoda stood in the court, on the right hand of which were three temples, with small grotesque seated figures all round, and fresh paintings on the ceiling. The guest chambers of this monastery were the best that we had seen; and we ate our lunch in a small room with a papered floor, warmed by a flue beneath.

I have said little about the scenery on this day's march, which was a total distance of 90 li or between 25 and 30 miles. But it was as glorious as any that had preceded it, though the march was much more fatiguing, a good deal of it being over slippery and slanting boulders by the torrent side, on which the traveller could not possibly retain his footing in soled boots, and where he would be helpless without the native string sandal. In parts it is a nasty climb, for the rocks have been worn smooth by the attrition of pilgrims' feet for centuries, and just below glimmers many a deep pool into which the slightest slip will send the wayfarer headlong. The torrent must further be crossed and recrossed many times by slender bridges, composed sometimes of a single pine stem. A further peril arises from the stepping-stones, consisting of rude boulders, uneasily perched in the foaming stream, and wobbling under the tread. The

return journey from Yuchom Sa to Chang an Sa was made by a different route, and we did not get back till 7.30 P.M. after a day of 13 hours.

After another night at the foot of the altar, whence the smiling Buddha looked down, we packed up before six in the morning to resume our journey to Söul. Then it was that my watch and chain and knife and the whole of my spare cash were found to have disappeared from under my pillow, where they had been hidden throughout the night. A prolonged altercation ensued, in which every one from the Abbot downwards took part—indignant charges on the one side, violent protestations of innocence on the other. Over an hour had been spent on this futile fusillade, when it became necessary to act. Accordingly we announced our intention to take the Abbot (who by the way could hardly have been mistaken for an ecclesiastical dignitary in any country but Korea) with us to Söul, and we placed him in the custody of the two official Yamen—runners who had been deputed to accompany our party. At 7.15 A.M. we were on the road, the arrested Abbot walking sulkily between his guards in the rear. I can see the swarthy vagabond as I write. We had not proceeded for more than a quarter of a mile when a shout was heard from behind, and a monk came running after us holding the recovered watch and chain and knife in his hand. The cash had of course disappeared! The Abbot was released, and returned to his peccant flock; but there was no need to offer him the customary tip, since his followers had thus effectively anticipated its voluntary pre-

sensation. Had we taken him to Söul I tremble to think of what might have been his fate.

From the valley we presently climbed to the top of the Tanpa Ryong or Crop-hair Ridge (so called because on reaching this point the candidate for the cloister in olden days was supposed to divest himself of his locks and to assume the shaven crown). Here is a magnificent double view: on the one side the entire sweep of the Keum Kang San range, 20 miles in length, the russet vesture of the foreground leading up to the bewildering panorama of grey steeples and pinnacles and crags, just tipped with a cloud-cap on the topmost spires; on the other side a valley equally as noble as that we had left; and beyond this the mountains, billow rolling upon billow for 60-70 miles, till lost in the blue haze of the horizon.

Next day we rejoined the main road to Söul at Chang-do; and so ended my never-to-be-forgotten visit to the monasteries and mysteries of the Diamond Mountains.

Since the Japanese annexation of Korea, the monasteries have been subjected to strict regulations, both as regards their property, their buildings, the choice of the superior, the tenure of office and the course of life.<sup>1</sup> There is now an examination for the priesthood; and I am afraid that if I went back to my former haunts, I should no longer find myself the victim of monkish larceny, or be able to arrest an Abbot of Chang an Sa.

<sup>1</sup> These regulations are embodied in two Temples Orders of September and October 1911, applicable to thirty principal monasteries, the names of which, as they are given in Japanese, I cannot always identify with the Korean equivalents.



MONASTERIES OF THE LEVANT





## MONASTERIES OF THE LEVANT

The world forgetting, by the world forgot.

POPE, *Eloisa to Abelard.*

It is now nearly ninety years since my relative and namesake, Robert Curzon, afterwards Lord Zouche, made those adventurous travels in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean which he afterwards described in his delightful book called *Monasteries of the Levant*—a work which enjoys the distinction, so rare in writings of the kind, not merely of surviving, but of remaining an authority upon its subject, as well as a classic of travel. As a boy I used to think that there must be something very grim and sombre in the contents of a volume with such a title. Austere monks and faded manuscripts passed in gloomy procession before my dismayed imagination. Nor was the impression alleviated by my childish recollection of the author, who in later life sometimes stayed at my home, and whom I still recall as a little old gentleman in a black swallow-tailed coat, habitually perched at the top of a ladder in a dim and dusty library. From this, as I then thought, unaccountable taste, I inferred that the book must be even more dismal than I had pictured it; and it was not till later days, when people began to ask

me if I was a son or a relative of a man who had written a fascinating work about monasteries, that, rather as a duty than a pleasure, I first opened its pages. But then how great was my surprise! In place of the dull monks and duller manuscripts, there was a wealth of incident sufficient to satisfy the appetite of a schoolboy; information which might instruct the student; and a sense of humour, keen yet never extravagant.

Accident placed it in my power in the year 1891 to visit two of the main scenes of Robert Curzon's wanderings, viz. Meteora in Thessaly and Athos, the Monasteries of the Air and the Monasteries of the Holy Mountain. It may be of interest to record the difference between my experiences and his, separated as they were by more than half a century of time.

# I

## ATHOS

It was after threading the poetic Vale of Tempe, that "long divine Peneian pass", along the banks of the coffee-coloured Peneius, and below the sister heights of Olympus and Ossa and Pelion, that we embarked on board the yacht for Athos. Pallene, the nearest of the three prongs which project trident-wise from Chalcidice into the sea, lay right opposite, the low land in the middle of the peninsula giving its loftier extremity the appearance of an island. Over this gap, quiveringly outlined against the sky, stood up the tremendous pyramid of Athos, symmetrical and solemn. As we steamed farther out to sea, the true relative proportions of the mountain trinity that we had left behind became revealed. Far away to the south the white spire of Mount Delphi in Euboea glimmered like a shrouded ghost against the horizon. Passing the wooded but uninteresting hills of southernmost Pallene, we put into the tiny harbour of Koupho, snugly concealed in the coast-line of the second prong, Sithonia; and early the next morning cast anchor in the little roadstead of Daphne, on the western side of Athos,

whose great peak, craggy and twin-pointed, soared into the sky ; while all its lower quarters, from the shoulders downwards, were wrapped in a mantle of sumptuous green.

Though I had both read and knew something of Mount Athos, I yet never recollect a case in which I found the discrepancy between imagination and reality more startling. I had pictured to myself a lofty and more or less precipitous cone, rising in abrupt isolation from the sea, with the monastic retreats perched like wild birds' nests here and there upon its flanks, but all clustered within the circumference of the single peak. Instead, I found a long and narrow and hilly promontory, projecting for 40 miles into the sea, covered with the most exquisite sylvan verdure from end to end, watered by dancing rivulets and bubbling springs, and interspersed throughout this distance and on both faces with lovely valleys and enchanting glens, where, at points of vantage, on rocks or on the seashore, had been planted the monastic buildings. These, moreover, so far from presenting an appearance of ascetic humility or remoteness, or straitened circumstance, resembled rather great baronial castles, with battlemented walls and towers, covering wide spaces of ground, and suggesting less the peaceful though sterile routine of conventual existence than the armed splendour of feudal chivalry. The smaller of these monasteries, crowning the summits of wave-washed crags, would recall the fortress of some turbulent baron of the Middle Ages, successfully defying the power of Emperor or of Pope. The larger

resembled walled towns, or the fortified palace of some great prince, whose hundreds of retainers might be quartered in the courts and quadrangles below the royal keep. Nor were these the evidences of bygone wealth or influence alone. They testified to a state of society when the Mediterranean was the battleground of contending fleets, when Latins and Saracens and pirates of every race and degree infested the waters of the Archipelago, and the approaches to the straits ; and the treasures of the monks, unless safely guarded and stoutly defended, might fall an easy prey to armed attack. At the seaward extremity of the long and lovely ridge, thus beautified by nature and adorned by man, rises, to more than three times its height, the peak of Athos proper, so familiar an object from pictures, so dread a scare to the ancient mariner, who scented peril and death in its cruel crags and stormy gales. Not more than four or five of the monasteries are built upon the peak of Athos, and these in situations near to the sea, the remainder of the total of twenty being scattered over 50 miles of coast-line on either side of the long promontory. Such, roughly speaking, is the panoramic aspect of Mount Athos.

Founded from the days of Constantine the Great onwards, these monasteries represent the several branches and nationalities of the Greek Church—Russians, Servians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Caucasians, etc., and are independent and self-governed ; a synod, composed of their respective *hegoumenoi* or abbots, meeting in weekly session at the small inland town of Karyes, to regulate common questions

of jurisdiction, estates, and the like. The Ottoman Government was at that time represented by a Governor at the last-named place, and by fezzed officials of the gendarme type at each monastery or monastic landing-place, who popped up everywhere and displayed a quite unaccountable eagerness in taking down the names of the yacht, its captain and ourselves, our starting-point and destination, and any details that the most persistent cross-examination could elicit. The monasteries are of two classes: those in which the monks own no property, lead a communal life under a *hegoumenos* or abbot, and take their meals in common; and those in which the property and revenues are shared by all the inmates, who are allowed to live apart, the management being in the hands of a Board or Committee elected by the monks.

Of the twenty monasteries the traveller, who has not, at least, a fortnight at his disposal, cannot expect to visit more than a certain proportion; although, as the majority of them are situated within easy access of the sea, the possession of a yacht causes a great saving of time in moving from one to the other.

From the landing-place in the little bay of Daphne we climbed up the hill by a kind of paved causeway to the monastery of Xeros Potamos, so called from a dry torrent-bed furrowing a picturesque gully to the right. This was the monastery where my relative had fixed his headquarters in 1887, and whence he had conducted his exploration of the peninsula. It is over 1000 years old, but has

suffered severely in war and revolution, and several of its restored buildings were of quite recent date. Entering the gateway, over which is sculptured in white marble the peacock crest of St. Andronicus, we found ourselves in a paved courtyard about fifty yards square, in which, after the invariable fashion of these monasteries, the principal church, a Byzantine structure in brick and stone, stands in the middle, while a marble basin for holy water, under a painted dome and surrounded by a marble balustrade, is placed just outside. The loggia, or porch to the church, contained the usual frescoes of inconceivable devils, suffering martyrs, and triumphant but dour-visaged saints, among whom St. Demetrius spearing his prostrate foe, and forty famous martyrs who appear to have been first drowned, then decapitated, then cut into pieces, and finally burnt, are the most conspicuous. The interior of this church contains a very richly-gilded iconostasis or altar-screen, and we were shown a small MS. of the Gospels, superbly bound in silver gilt. Above the loggia is the library, where the books and MSS. are now neatly stored in cases with glass doors. A French translation of the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, and a modern guide-book to Paris, seemed to indicate that the holy fathers found time to vary the austerity of conventual discipline with occasional dips into lighter literature. The refectory is also of the stereotyped order, shaped like the upper limbs of a cross with an apse at the farther end or high table. Here is depicted in fresco the Last Supper, and full-length saints of



lugubrious aspect, with terrific beards, adorn the walls with a sort of dismal splendour. A projecting pulpit is also an invariable feature, occupied at meal times by a deacon, who reads passages from the Scriptures, so that even when giving necessary sustenance to the body, the banqueters may not forget the superior requirements of the soul.

Around the principal court are three stories of dwellings, built of red bricks in patterns, and in some cases adorned with arcades. A clock tower contains a big clock with the date 1774, and a diabolical-looking stuffed figure standing by its side, who wields a hammer, but plays no part in the striking. The monastery at the time of my visit contained eighty admitted monks and forty probationers, and Merianthus was the name of its Hegoumenos.

By this reverend signor we were shown a cell where the monastic tailor was busily occupied with a sewing-machine, and which contained also a plank bed and mattress, and a wooden cupboard ; by him, too, we were conducted to the guest-chamber which, in all these monasteries, is a room on the topmost story with a balcony facing the sea, and fitted all round with a divan. Here the visitor takes his seat, exchanges compliments, signs the strangers' book, and consumes an incalculable amount of mastic or of anisette, of jam, and coffee—hospitalities which are proffered with a suave regularity and cannot with politeness be refused. Every monastery further contains several sleeping-rooms for guests, very often neatly furnished with an iron bedstead, a table, and a chair.

Adorned with roses presented to us by the monks, and mounted on mules which they also willingly lent, we next bent our way to the great Russian monastery variously called Russicon (owing to its having been restored by the Empress Catherine I. of Russia) and St. Panteleemon, situated above the sea about forty minutes to the north. I can scarcely describe the beauty of this, as of all the walks or rides that we took upon the Holy Mountain. Its sides are covered with thickets of the richest and most varied vegetation, the products of antagonistic climes appearing to find equal satisfaction and sustenance on this amazing soil. The muletracks or paved causeways that lead from one monastery to another pass through continual glades of trees or flowering shrubs, plane tree and pine tree, oak, poplar, olive, cypress, and myrtle. There, too, are arbutus and berberis, cyttisus and bay, wild spurge and azalea, and everywhere the pale bloom of the asphodel, the white and pink of the cystos, and the overwhelming lilac of the Judas tree.

I was extremely anxious to see the Russian monastery, having heard much of its strangely un-monastic character, and of the political designs which it was supposed both to exemplify and perhaps in the future more directly to promote. From a distance at sea we had observed its vast and pre-tentious buildings, the green cupolas and glittering balls and crosses of its churches, and the huge, factory-like stone structures with red roofs that line the water's edge. As we drew near the precincts we passed through what was no more nor less than

a busy Russian village agog with industry and work. Immense stacks of timber were stored in warehouses, heaps of iron girders and even iron rails littered the ground, several forges were radiating a white heat, and scores of workmen, who looked as little like monks as a private of the Salvation Army looks like a Grenadier, were engaged in manifold forms of toil. There were said already to be in the monastery 800 monks, and 100 probationers, with 300 attendants in addition, making a total of 1200 men in the establishment—a sufficient contrast to the 130 chronicled by my namesake in 1837, long before the institution had become a focus of political ambition. And yet the total was manifestly about to be greatly increased, if the immense building on the shore, six stories high, and capable of accommodating several hundred persons, the floors of which were just being put in, was designed for further inmates. In the vaults below the monastery there were reported to be concealed large stores of rifles and ammunition. A great many of the monks whom I saw looked far better suited to shoulder a musket than to wear the cowl; and the entire establishment bore the appearance not of a retreat of pious-minded persons fleeing from the temptations of a wicked world, but of an enterprising colony bent upon aggravating its territories and providing itself with stores, dépôts, and all the necessary furniture of temporal aggrandisement. A ship was even being built in the small harbour, where also a steamboat was lying. In the pursuit of these aims the Russian monks had filched a good deal of land

from their neighbours, with the result of great discord and even bloodshed. But here, as elsewhere, the Russians appeared to conduct matters with an independent hand, and to treat with some indifference the protests or the scruples of their neighbours.

I do not think that the Russians were well pleased to see an English party, and the Hegoumenos Andreas failed to put in an appearance, being variously reported as engaged in prayer and as indisposed. The monastery contained four churches, of which the principal was a large building in the main court, containing a great deal of gilding and many silver-gilt and jewelled icons, while the newest was constructed in the topmost story of the principal wing. The refectory was a long room shaped like a Greek capital gamma, in the upper branch of which was a large blue fresco of Christ walking upon the waves. Rows of tables were laid out for the mid-day meal, and a man might fare worse than as a disciple of St. Panteleemon, seeing that to every two monks were apportioned a bowl swimming with a concoction of vinegar, water, onions, cucumber, and lettuce, and a bottle of red wine, as well as plates of prunes, great slices of brown bread, a wooden spoon, and a knife and fork for each, actually rolled up in a napkin. The monks seemed of a much younger and lustier type than those we had seen at the other monasteries. We were shown the library, which was well equipped and fitted in the most modern style, besides having an excellent catalogue; the visitors' quarters, which were exceptionally extensive and commodious; and the reception room, an

immense apartment, hung with portraits of the Russian and Greek royal families, and with the photographs of eminent ecclesiastics, among whom figured the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Not even the dainties, however, with which we were here regaled, could blind our eyes as to the character of the whole institution; and in taking leave of it I could not help wondering whether the Russian Monastery might not be heard of again in the drama of European statecraft.

With the acquisition of Macedonia by Greece in 1912, Athos became Hellenic territory, and for a while the monastery of Panteleemon fell on evil days. Since then it has recovered a large portion of its numbers; and if its denizens no longer harbour political ambitions—as to which there may be doubts—they represent with imposing prestige the Russian branch of the Eastern Church. In the central monastery and its affiliated establishments, there have been at one time as many as 5000 residents; although in the central assembly, by which the Peninsula is governed, they only have one vote among twenty, which is the total number of monasteries fixed by canonical law, and incapable of being exceeded. Of this total seventeen are Greek, one Bulgarian, and one Serbian, the actual numerical strength of the single Russian monastery with its branches exceeding that of all the Greeks put together. In the contrast between the two classes of establishment, the Greek and the Russian, was typified the difference between the Old World and the New: the spick-and-span, up-to-date, business-

like, glittering smartness of the one, providing a foil to the ancient architecture, the dim frescoes, the smoke-darkened walls, the faded gilding and the tranquil dilapidation of the others.

Embarking in the yacht, we next sailed round the great Peak of Athos, passing on the way the monastery of Simopetra, superbly situated at the top of a crag several hundred feet above the sea, and connected with the mainland by an aqueduct of two rows of arches. Its projecting balconies—a common feature in all these monasteries—and its majestic position, gave it a most picturesque and impressive appearance, though I fear that my excellent relative must have filled in the greater part of his somewhat imaginative sketch of it after his return home. I afterwards read in the papers that this monastery had been partially destroyed by fire. Past Simopetra, past St. Nicholas, St. Dionysius, and St. Gregorius, situated at greater or less heights above the sea, but all of them quaint and beautiful; past the grey craggy peak with small hermit huts and cave dwellings clinging to its narrow ledges, with its mighty base confronting the waters, and its naked crest dividing the skies; round the south-east corner, and up the eastern coast we glided, till presently, lowering a boat, we pulled into a little cove where a small brig was lying, and which we believed to be the landing-place for the famous monastery of Lavra. We toiled up a steep ascent to a somewhat sombre and inferior-looking monastery, only to find that we had come to the wrong place, and to see at some distance on the right the battlements and towers of

the real Lavra crowning a hill above the sea. A lovely walk of three-quarters of an hour brought us to the monastery gates, where we were welcomed by the Hegoumenos, an old gentleman of stately manners and great urbanity. Lavra was once the largest and wealthiest of all the monasteries of Athos; but in war and revolution it had lost much of its external property and endowment, and only contained 120 monks. Its crenelated rampart, its lofty walls and its watch-towers gave it the appearance of a fortified town, and it is recorded that it was once defended by cannon. This monastery was founded in or about the year A.D. 968 by decree of the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, by a hermit named Athanasius, who enjoyed the imperial confidence; and it is the oldest and in some respects the most celebrated of the monasteries of Athos.

Entering by the glass-covered porch, we passed through the great gateway, and found ourselves in a courtyard which contained a curious but happy jumble of churches, and shrines, and marble fonts, and wooden balconies, and tiled roofs, and coloured walls, and irregular staircases, and incongruous towers. From the *hieron* or holy place behind the iconostasis in the main church—a domed building painted red—the Hegoumenos brought out the most cherished possession of Lavra, a fragment of the true Cross set in a priceless reliquary of pure gold and studded with diamonds and jewels, which was originally presented by the imperial founder. Almost all the monasteries on Mount Athos possess fragments of the true Cross similarly encased, and



*Lavra de São Athanasio*

THE LAVRA OF SAINT ATHANASIOS

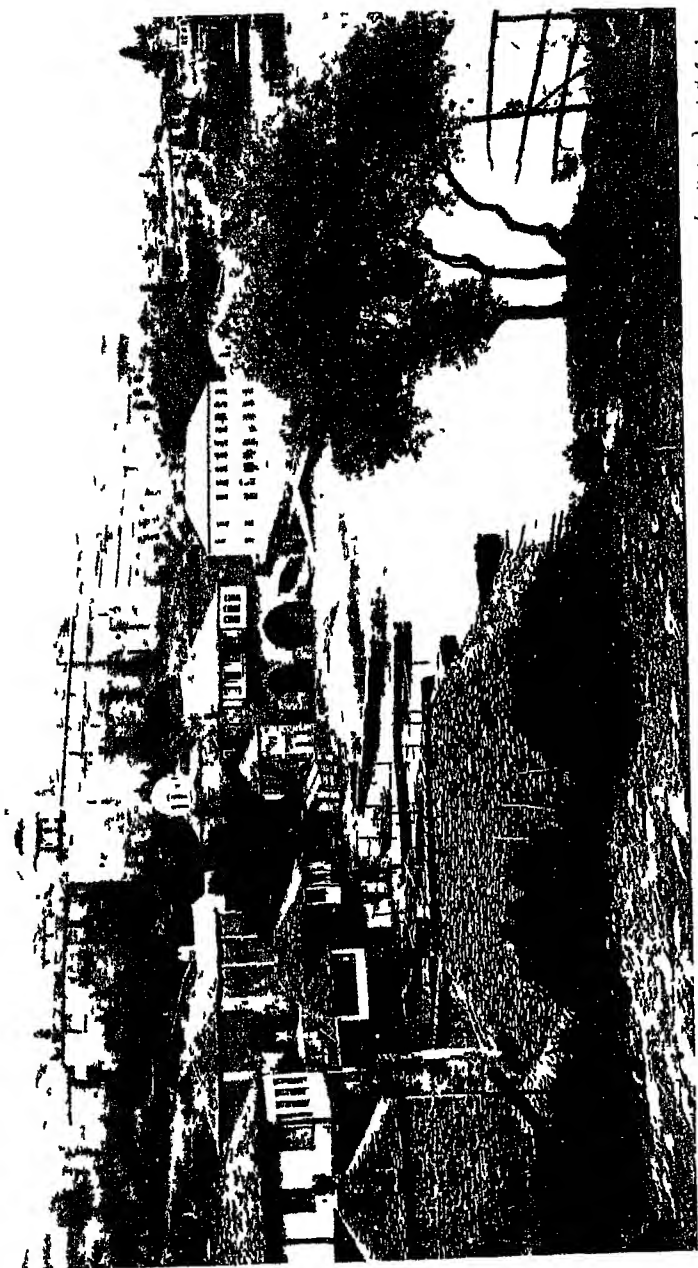




authenticated by irreproachable documents. A beautiful dado of Damascene or Rhodian tiles adorns two of the transepts of this church; and the floor is paved with marble and mosaic patterns, as ancient and uneven as that of St. Mark's at Venice. The library of Lavra is contained behind glass cases in two apartments, one for the MSS., the other for the bound books. Here we saw the early illustrated MS. on Botany mentioned by Robert Curzon, and a New Testament that once belonged to the Emperor Alexius. In the cruciform refectory we observed an arrangement also presented at Vatopedion, viz. the horseshoe-shaped marble tables, with their bases fronting outwards, and with grooves indented in the marble tops for the running off of water. There were twenty-one of these tables principally of the same shape, with wooden benches round them. In the right transept is depicted the death of St. Athanasius, not the familiar father of that name, but the pious hermit who founded the monastery in the tenth century. Here also is depicted St. Ignatius Theophoros being torn in the arena by lions; one of these animals has decisively closed its upper and lower jaw upon the saint's right shoulder, but the holy man has just sent the other spinning. It was with regret that we bade adieu to the holy fathers of Lavra and descended by a steep path to the harbour of the monastery, a tiny little cove protected by a wall and a bold Byzantine tower, which seemed to be better suited to feudal warfare or a corsair's stronghold than to the retreat of harmless piety and grey-haired innocence.

In a quiet and beautiful bay, facing towards the north-east, stands upon a slope above the seashore the magnificent monastery of Vatopedion, founded originally by the Emperor Constantine the Great, and at the time of my visit the largest, the most richly appointed, and the best preserved of all the Greek establishments. Scawards it presents a most striking appearance, being as large as a small town. From terraces of vineyards and orchards rise its lofty white walls with double balconies, its moss-tiled roofs, and immense keep. None of the monasteries, inside or outside, suggested so fair an idea of what the larger monasteries must have been in the pre-Tudor days in England.

In the gateway we were received by the secretary in the absence of the Hegoumenos, and were conducted as usual to the main church. It stands in the big quadrangle, which is one of the most picturesque places that I ever saw. Situated on the hill-slope, it is paved with grass-grown stones and surrounded by a medley of buildings, painted blue and white and chocolate colour, with a big stone belfry tower, and many staircases, domes, and kiosks. Outside the church is an immense marble font, the canopy of which is supported by a double row of marble pillars. In the outer portico are three fine Byzantine mosaics of the same style as those at Ravenna and St. Mark's. A semi-circular panel over the door depicts Christ, the Virgin, and St. John, and there are oblong panels on either side. In a corner stands a picture of the six emperors who were the chief benefactors of Vatopedion, the middle and most prominent place being



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THE MONASTERY OF AIOPTIDON



assigned to Theodosius the Great and Cantacuzene. The interior of the church was the most resplendent that I saw in Athos. The painted walls and domes, the floor of tessellated marble and mosaic, the rich red gilding of the altar-screen, the glass-framed and flashing icons, the inlaid lecterns and doors, and the superb brocade hangings gave an impression of devotional splendour hard to equal. The treasures of the *hieron* were eagerly displayed to us by the holy fathers, who were delightfully proud of their possessions. From cupboards containing silver shrines and reliquaries, painted icons, and silver censers without number, were especially extracted the head of St. John Chrysostom and the girdle of the Virgin Mary, which it appears that St. Thomas, having missed his opportunity in the lower world, was despatched to heaven to fetch. Here, too, was standing an old English grandfather clock, bearing the superscription, M. Dexter, London. There were twenty-three churches or chapels in all within the walls of Vatopedion; and the establishment consisted of 180 monks and 30 probationers, making with the attendants a total of 250. Robert Curzon, in 1887, reported 300 monks as resident in the monastery. We were shown in due course the library, kept in admirable order, the hospital fitted with large clean bedsteads, the apothecary's shop, the private apartment of the secretary, which might have been the rooms of a somewhat austere Oxford don, and the refectory, restored at the end of the eighteenth century, and fitted with thirty large marble tables like those at Lavra. The corridors were broad, stone-paved,

and scrupulously clean ; everything bore the air of good management and comfort. The visitors' book, which had been kept for thirty years, contained many English names, including the officers of two British men-of-war. The monks who escorted us were men of high culture and courtly manners, speaking Italian, and understanding French and German ; and Vatopedion in every respect appeared to present us with an image of monastic life at its best and purest, such as probably could be seen nowhere else in Europe.

Outside the monastery lay the graveyard, overgrown with wild flowers and studded with small wooden crosses. Its restricted space was rendered ample for the demands made upon it, by the custom of burying the bodies without coffins and of exhuming what remains after the lapse of three years, when the skulls and bones are collected and added to a now formidable heap in a vault beneath the mortuary chapel. On a hill near Vatopedion stood up the roofless and windowless walls of a college which was once founded here in connection with the monastery, but which was deserted after the War of Independence, and had since crumbled into picturesque ruin.

Pantocrator, or the Monastery of the Almighty, situated upon a rock above the sea, but less romantic than its neighbour the stately Stavronicates, was one of the smaller monasteries which we visited. From here we undertook a most pleasant excursion of an hour and a quarter on muleback to Karyes, which is situated on the eastern side of the spinal ridge of Athos, commanding a glorious view of the wooded

declivities sloping to the blue sea, of the island of Imbros right opposite, and seemingly only 20 miles distant instead of 70, and of the jagged peaks of Samothrace farther to the north. The road which we pursued wound through scenery such as I have already described ; and in the Elysian valleys between the hills were scattered smiling cottages and farmhouses, orchards, vineyards, and arable plots. Unceasing music was in the air, and an eternal summer suffused the scene with soft radiance.

Karyes was then a big little town, its main street bright with shops where all the necessities of life were offered for sale. It was the universal provider of the peninsula, and there was scarcely a commodity that could not be bought there, from leather boots to tinned sardines. Flocks of sheep and goats are driven in from the mainland, and large boxes of hens' eggs hail from the same quarter, the exclusion of the female sex being rigidly applied to all members of the animal world whose entry to Athos is capable of detection. We kept a sharp lookout everywhere for female cats or dogs, but were unable to detect the slightest infringement of this inhospitable rule.

After paying our respects to the Turkish Governor of Karyes, who was fat, talkative, and quite unable to understand why we should dishonour the town by a stay of less than several days, we visited the old church—the most ancient in Athos—whose structural design and flat terraced roof recall the early Christian basilica ; and the council chamber of the Synod, which we were disappointed to find a very ordinary apartment with a divan running round it,



and a table for the secretary. One or two of the *hegoumenoi* were already in Karyes for an approaching meeting ; and the Abbot of the Iberon, a noble old gentleman, with aquiline features and Aaronic beard, whom Rembrandt would at once have enlisted as a sitter, was the most splendid figure that we saw on the peninsula.

An hour's walk brought us down to the sea again, to the imposing buildings of the Iberon, so-called according to Robert Curzon because the monastery had once been restored by a Georgian Prince or, as I was told, because its recruits were gathered from the Georgian district and Caucasia, formerly known as Iberia, lying between the Black and Caspian Seas. This monastery bore a close resemblance to Vato-pedion, being almost as large in dimensions, and containing many evidences of prosperity and wealth. A fire had destroyed several of its buildings twenty-five years earlier, but these had since been restored ; and new marble altars and offerings in the church testified to the liberality of recent patrons. The main church was painted a chocolate colour outside, and contained the customary assortment of cupolas and domes. In the *hieron* we were shown, besides the ordinary relics, the leg and part of the back of the Woman of Samaria, who must have been tall of stature, and who in her lifetime can never have seen jewels one-hundredth part of the value of those by which her last vestiges were adorned. Here also were a great number of skulls of the illustrious departed, and some gorgeous vestments. An adjoining church contains the oldest icon on Mount

Athos, the dim features of the Virgin and Child emerging obscurely from a perfect coruscation of jewels. A succession of devotees have decorated the image with glittering necklaces, collars, diadems, aigrettes, brooches, crosses, and stars. I fully expected to hear that this painting was the product of St. Luke, who is believed to have excelled with the brush, but the monks of Iberon would appear to have missed this excellent opportunity. We had no time to see the library, which Robert Curzon described as the most richly stocked on Athos fifty years before ; but upon my asking whether it still retained its pre-eminence, the answer was returned, "By the help of God it is so."

As we left the monastery a singularly discordant peal of bells in the campanile was rung in our honour, a wooden *semandron* or signal-board having been similarly banged at Karyes ; and the polite and amiable monks, of whose affability there as elsewhere it is impossible to speak in exaggerated terms, accompanied us down to the large Byzantine watch-tower on the beach. I told the acting Hegoumenos that I had been more than once in Tiflis, and in the country from which presumably the majority of his flock was derived. "Ah," he said, "I lived many years myself in Tiflis," and then—after a pause—"and do the beautiful ladies still exist there ?" "Yes," I said, "they do," and (fired by the holy man's encouragement), "may I ask if Your Holiness sometimes cherishes an affectionate recollection of their charms ?" "Yes," he replied with a pathetic twinkle in his eye, "I have, indeed, sometimes an *ἀνάμνησις*."

Such was my parting recollection of the holy fathers of Athos. Unlike my distinguished relative, I had coveted none of their MSS. nor bargained for any parchment rolls. Nor, like him, had I come with letters from the Patriarch of Constantinople or with a special "chit", as we call it in India, from the Archbishop of Canterbury. But, quite ordinary travellers as we were, we could not have been more hospitably received by the good monks had I been the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. I like to think that since then, though fallen on evil days, they continue to survive, and even after the devastating tumult of the Great War, which raged so near to their monastic retreats, still preserve somewhat of the tranquil charm of their sequestered existence.

The main interest, however, of a visit to Athos consists less in its picturesque beauty and rather pathetic decay than it does in the fact that here, almost alone in the world of change lies or lay a fragment of the mediaeval world; existing, though on a diminished scale, much as it existed in the days of the Byzantine Emperors, when Constantinople was in its glory and a cultured and opulent civilisation held the Eastern world in its sway. Could we transport ourselves to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, I do not imagine that Athos, except for the rebuilding of edifices destroyed by fire or war, would have presented a very different appearance from what it does now. The links connecting it with the past have been wrenched and twisted, but never entirely broken; and the Holy Mountain with its

castled retreats is an original manuscript, rather than a palimpsest, from the Book of Time.

Perhaps my readers may be interested in the fate of the MSS. that my ingenious relative carried away with him from Athos. They remained in his possession at his beautiful country seat of Parham in Sussex until his death in 1873, when they passed first to his son who succeeded him and then to his daughter who succeeded her brother—the title of Zouche being one of the few that descend in the female line. She bequeathed them to the nation on her death in 1917, and in the British Museum they now lie. There are all the MSS., sixteen in number, that Robert Curzon describes himself (in chapters xxv. and xxviii. of his book) as having acquired during his residence at the Monastery of Caracalla, which he made his headquarters on the peninsula. There are the eleventh century *Life and Works of Johannes Climax*, *Hegoumenos of Mount Sinai*, chapter xxvii.; there are the two magnificent copies of the Gospels in the ancient Bulgarian tongue, which the monks, ignorant of their value, gave him for nothing. And there, too, the quarto of the Four Gospels of the eleventh or twelfth century, bound in faded red velvet with silver clasps, and with the headings of the Gospels written in large plain letters of gold; and the immense quarto Evangelistarium, 16 inches square, bound in faded green or blue velvet and said to be in the autograph of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, its titles being written in gold, covering the whole page, which Robert Curzon described as “the second finest Greek MS. to be met with anywhere” (chapter xxvi.).

This "superb volume" after five hours of haggling he obtained for £22, with the Gospels thrown in; the worthy monks being left quite happy at the manner in which, as they thought, "they had done the silly traveller". Vendors and purchaser are long ago at rest; but any one who cares to go to the MSS. Department of the great Museum, can, as he gazes at the treasures over which they chattered and fought, revive the memories of those distant but unforgettable scenes.

## II

### METEORA

No such romantic or adventurous approach to the Monasteries of the Air (τὰ Μετέωρα Μοναστήρια) was open to me as it had been to my namesake in 1834. Starting from Corfu and rowing over the sea to the mainland opposite he marched across the Albanian mountains to Yanina, then the residence of a Turkish Vizier, and from thence made his way under an escort of picturesque but friendly robbers, in circumstances of no small discomfort and some peril, to the valley of the Peneius, from whose base the crags of Meteora lift their astonishing pinnacles into the air.

I approached the same destination from the opposite quarter, with the double advantage of a pleasant sea journey and access by rail.

A long and lovely sail up the Gulf of Volo brought the yacht to the port of that name, Greek since 1881, lying at the foot of Mount Pelion. The steep slopes of the latter are still covered with the forests that made it famous in classic lore. From there the timbers of the good ship *Argo* were hewn ere she put forth from the adjacent harbour of Iolcos in

quest of the Golden Fleece. Amid the trees on the hill-side, right up to its snow-streaked crown, glistened the white fronts of cottages and villas, pleasing retreats from the dusty commonplace of the maritime town. The Union Jack, floating in front of the smartest of the new Italianesque houses that line the hollow of the bay, marked the residence of the consular representative of Great Britain.

From Volo a railway had been laid inland since the Greek occupation, running in a north-westerly direction for thirty-seven miles to Larissa, the modern, as it was also the ancient, capital of Thessaly; and in a westerly direction for 100 miles to the terminus of Kalambaka immediately below the rocks of Meteora. So easy was it for the traveller, by the aid of these conveniences, to make that pilgrimage which fifty years earlier could only be accomplished with a certainty of robbery and at the risk of life. On the way we passed for miles through the rich and generous plain of Thessaly, green at that season (April) with young corn, and renowned of old for its horse-breeding pastures, past Velestino, where Apollo once tended the flocks of King Admetus, and where stalwart young Greeks in frilled white petticoats, white woollen hose, and shoes with big woollen rosettes on their turned-up points, stalked up and down the station platform; past Pharsalia (the modern Pharsalus), where the crash of legions decided the Empire of the World, and whence Caesar marched to the Capitol at Rome, while Pompey fled to the sands of Alexandria; past Trikkala, where from the hallowed shrine of Aescula-



THE MONASTERIES OF METEORA AND ST. BARLAAM

*Underwood Press Service.*





pius his two sons started forth for Troy; through a country sacred in legend, eventful in history, fair to the eyesight.

For over an hour before reaching our destination the mountain range bounding the plain on the north could be seen to terminate abruptly in a series of detached rocks and burly mountain-spurs, rearing their bare and contorted heads above the valley bottom, where in a wide pebbly bed the Peneius furrowed his vagrant way. It was as though with a monstrous scalpel knife the mountain had at some time been flayed alive, and then with strokes of a Titan's axe gashes had been hewn in the excoriated mass, and portions of it detached from the remainder, the severed lumps upstanding in grotesque shapes of pinnacle and sugar loaf and columnar spire. At the foot of the principal cliff lies the trim little town of Kalambaka, the rock face, pitted and pocked with natural cavities, rising sheer behind it to a height of over 1500 feet above the plain. A little to the right stands an even more uncommon brotherhood of rocks, projecting to a great height like a cluster of megalithic and inconceivable boars' tusks from the plain; and on the summit of two of these cones could be seen outlined against the sky the tiled roofs and towers of Hagia Trias (Holy Trinity) and Hagios Stephanos (St. Stephen), the two nearest monasteries of Meteora. It was at the latter, as both the easiest of access and the most commodious, that we proposed to spend the two following nights.

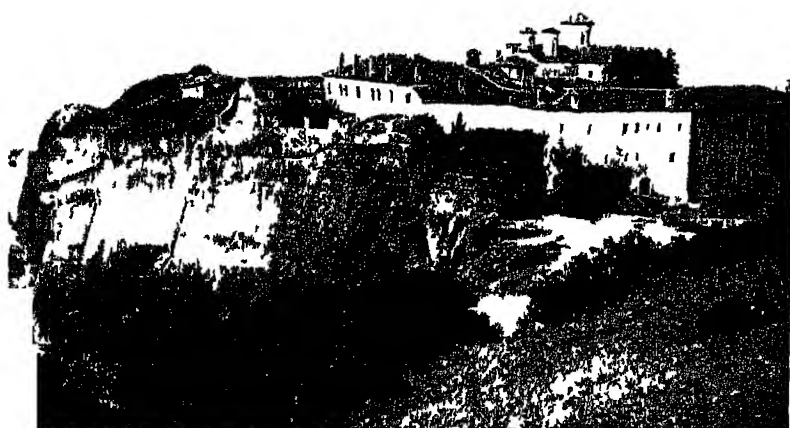
Starting on foot from the station, and preceded

by an escort of soldiers and gendarmes, whose services, provided for us by the courtesy of M. Tricoupis, the Prime Minister of Greece, we began by regarding as superfluous, but ended by finding most useful, we left the town on our left, and commenced a circuitous climb around the eastern base of the rock that supports St. Stephen. For a little over an hour we continued the ascent through groves of white mulberries and plots laid out with vines, succeeded, as we rose, by dwarf oaks, cytissus, and hornbeam. The path was once a stone causeway, which had fallen to pieces. At length, rounding a corner at the top, we were suddenly confronted by the monastery walls pierced with miniature windows, and severed from us by a narrow but deep chasm, some eighteen feet across, over which was stretched a bridge. The insecurity of the old days, now gone by, was shown by an iron hook in the wall above the entrance, by which the drawbridge was once hauled up, and only lowered for trusty visitors. The modern structure was fixed and permanent. We entered the monastery, and in the absence of the Hegoumenos (Superior) were received by the venerable Father Sophronius, an elderly gentleman with grey beard and benevolent smile, who during our stay rendered us every possible attention, answered our irreproachable but to him unintelligible ancient Greek in still more irreproachable and to us equally unintelligible modern Greek, attended but declined to partake of our meals, and in every way comported himself as a meritorious disciple of St. Basil.



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THE MONASTERY OF HAGIA TRIAS



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THE MONASTERY OF HAGIOS SIMPPIANOS



The Monastery of St. Stephen was one of the largest and was still the richest of the monasteries of Meteora. It owned villages and vineyards and lands; and with their endowments supported not only its own buildings and services, but schools and charities elsewhere. Under the Turkish rule the monasteries and their revenues were left intact, a prudent act of conciliation on the part of an alien race and religion. But the Greek Government, since it had entered into possession, was pursuing the policy of allowing the existing establishments to die out, after which time the monasteries themselves and the administration of their property should pass into the hands of the State. Out of twenty-four which once existed on the neighbouring rocks, only four were tenanted (in 1834 the number was seven); and where their inmates might in the Middle Ages be counted by hundreds, they could now be packed without difficulty into a third class railway carriage. Four *caloyers* only remained at St. Stephen as compared with 13 or 14 in Robert Curzon's time; but in the church I counted seats for thirty-two, and in the *pronaos*, or ante-chapel, seats for twenty-seven.

The buildings of St. Stephen resembled in character those of the other monasteries, although in some respects less remarkable. There are two Byzantine churches, an older and smaller building, containing a picture on which is marked the date 387, and the main church, built of stone, which like all Greek churches consists of a parallelogram beneath a dome. There were no frescoes here upon the walls; but, on the other hand, there was a

finely carved wooden iconostasis or altar screen, said to have been made in Russia, which is a marvel of delicate workmanship, and contains four icons, or sacred pictures, behind glass. A big glass chandelier, the gift of some recent devotee in the year 1867, hung from the dome, and smaller silver chandeliers depended from the roof. Standing about were a number of lecterns, once manufactured in the monastery workshops, inlaid with ivory, wood, and mother-of-pearl; and the bishop's chair was also a masterpiece of wood-carving. In other parts of the monastery were the kitchen and refectory; a row of sixteen disused cells, opening out of a rickety wooden corridor; the principal guest-chamber, which was given up to ourselves, and which contained two chromos of the then King and Queen of Greece on the walls; and some rooms in which beds and quilts were actually provided for the entertainment of visitors. There is a picturesque irregularity in the extent, appearance, and arrangement of all these monasteries, in the red tiles of their roofs, in their small paved courts and vaulted passages, above all in their bizarre structural adaptation to the rocky pinnacles upon which they have been reared.

From a natural platform outside St. Stephen's, a superb panorama is spread before the eye. Below stretches the verdant Thessalian plain, mile succeeding mile to a faint horizon, the white citadel of Trikkala standing upon a little knoll in the middle distance. The pink stony trail of the Peneius meanders along the valley bottom; and immediately below the mountain the trim rows of leafy vines

strike a contrast with the red roof-trees of Kalam-baka. When the eye leaves the plain and begins to ascend, every variety of hill and mountain scenery is outspread before it. First are green and sylvan acclivities ; then the pine-clad range of Kotziakas, with white snow-streaks amid the topmost firs ; above and beyond, range upon range of purest snow to where in the dim distance Tymphrestus rears his 7600 feet of glittering stature against the sky. To the north the great range of Pindus mingles its snows with snowy clouds ; but with all deference to my eminent namesake, who wrote of the snow-clad summit of Olympus as towering above all others, I am compelled to state that under no conceivable circumstances could it be seen from any of the heights of Meteora.

Early the next morning we started upon our walk to the more famous and even more peculiar monasteries of the Great Meteora, called also Metamorphosis or Transfiguration, and of St. Barlaam ; known to travellers as the places to which ascent can only be gained by the uncommon method of a net at the end of a rope, whereby the visitor is or used to be hauled up a height of several hundred feet to the monastic eyrie on its isolated crag summit.

On our way we were able to form a good impression of these fantastic rock phenomena, and of the means by which they had probably been produced. Swept by deluges, torn by convulsions of nature, the ridge of conglomerate rocks which here pushes forward into the valley of the Peneius has towards its outer extremity been denuded of every particle



of vegetation ; while the more easily disintegrated and perishable portions of the rock have altogether disappeared, leaving only a series of detached and rounded pillars, severed from each other by deep gorges, and worn by the action of the weather into fanciful shapes of obelisk and pyramid and spire. These solitary rock-towers are grouped together in picturesque confusion in a space of ground the entire circuit of which is several miles in extent. Some of the smaller ones look like little mushrooms, poking up their tiny heads alongside of their more majestic brethren, who soar upwards with imposing bulk. It is on the top of the most inaccessible of these natural pillars that were reared the Aerial Monasteries of Meteora—very rightly so called—sometimes fitting as naturally to the summit of the rock as a thimble to the finger, elsewhere occupying a portion only of its surface. The only site in the world among those which I have visited that presents any similarity to Meteora is the sacred rock of Monserrat (Mons Serratus), near Barcelona ; although in the latter case the monastery is built not on the top of any of the bare needle-like cones but in a hollow saddle between. In nature the only sight to which I can suggest any resemblance is that of a number of storks' nests built, as I have often seen them, on the summit of tall steeples and minarets ; or, on a smaller scale, of a colony of penguins, each nesting on its solitary pillar of mud. The rocks of Meteora are further punctured by numerous crevices and caves, which were eagerly occupied by those anchorites who thought the social joys of a monastery too

lax a school for heaven, and who preferred to burrow in tiny holes approached only by rude ladders hanging upon the vertical cliff. Traces of several of these deserted habitations are visible, and of the frescoes with which the pious inmates adorned their comfortless retreats.

In the days of their prime, there were nearly 600 monasteries existing in all parts of Greece at the time of the War of Independence, but these had dwindled in the middle of the century to not more than 150. They were, however, not learned brotherhoods, as some might imagine, but rather charitable and hospitable institutions. The Meteora Monasteries date from the Middle Ages, and their aerial sites were clearly selected for strategic purposes, the Macedonian border having always been a favourite scene of pillage and plunder.

A lovely walk of an hour and a half through a glade of mountain oaks, past the monastery of the Holy Trinity on its separate crag, and other abandoned eyries on lower peaks, brought us to the great mass of rock, 1820 feet high, which is crowned by the buildings of the Great Meteora. Above us was a sheer scarp of rock, about one hundred feet high ; and upon this was reared a tower of about the same height culminating in a wooden shed, from which it was evident that the rope and net were worked. No signs, however, of these implements were forthcoming, and the holy fathers appeared to be indifferent to our approach. We shouted and fired guns to no purpose ; and it was not till after some minutes that a venerable face was protruded from

the aerial loft and communications were interchanged. But not even then did the ascent at once become feasible; for as there were only two monks in the monastery (in Robert Curzon's time there were twenty), assistance was needed at the capstan to haul us up. Accordingly a series of rude ladders, attached together like the links of a chain, and whose lower end had hitherto been hitched up by a rope from aloft, were let down so that they fitted on to the top of another ladder reared against the rock from the ground.

The upper ladders led to a small doorway in the rock, from which an alternative entrance to the monastery was provided by a staircase inside. When the ladders are hitched up, and the rope is coiled round the capstan, the monastery is absolutely inaccessible, and its inmates can bid defiance to any foe but cannon. The ladders furnish a most unpleasant mode of ascent, as they are only loosely strung together, and flap against the perpendicular cliff with each movement of the climber. However, three of our escort with some gallantry swarmed up and disappeared into the hole in the rock. Presently a big iron hook with something hanging from it was seen to descend from the pulley in the shed. When it reached the ground we saw that the something was a rude cord net in which we were to ascend. This is spread out on the ground, a blanket is stretched upon it, the visitor takes his seat on the blanket with his legs curled up to his chin, the outer meshes of the net are caught up over his head and strung upon the iron hook, a shout is raised, and

like a trussed quail he suddenly finds himself contracted into a ball and being drawn upwards into the air, spinning slowly round and sometimes softly colliding against the rock. When he gets to the top—the ascent lasting from one and a quarter to one and three-quarter minutes—he is laid hold of by two brawny monks, hauled into the shed, and unrolled upon the floor. Down go the hook and net again, and up comes the next visitor. Robert Curzon said the height of the lift was 150 feet ; but my guide, who declared he had measured it with some English travellers, protested it was 250. The sensation is not a disagreeable one, and the rope is so sound and strong as to disarm any fear of accident ; but when it has completely filled the capstan, and begins to form another reel, there is a nasty kink which brings your heart into your mouth as the jar reaches you in the net. When we reach the top we see that the rope passes over a pulley and is wound round a windlass or wooden drum, which is made to revolve by four long capstan bars, with one or two men pushing at each. Women are not allowed to enter the monastery, and some English ladies belonging to a recent party of visitors had been obliged to remain below while their companions were hauled up.

The Hegoumenos Polycarp, an estimable old gentleman, not unlike the amiable Sophronius in appearance, received us and did the honours. He showed us the two churches of the monastery, the largest of which, built in stone with inland courses of brick, contains a richly gilded iconostasis, while

its walls are embellished from floor to roof with full-length frescoes or medallions of saints, and with an elaborate painting of the tortures of several holy martyrs, who are being beaten, stabbed, impaled, torn asunder, or in other ways forcibly but tediously deprived of the vital spark. There is something solemn and even beautiful about the dim interior with its dark blue colouring, its peering fresco faces, its ancient furniture, and the glimmer of its gilded screen. Outside the church are suspended the wooden and iron *semandrons*, which take the place of bells in the Greek monasteries. They consist of either rudely shaped boards, which are struck with mallets or hammers to summon the monks to prayer, or of iron tyres shaped into a semi-hoop. In the walls of the monastery may be seen embedded plates of that famous glazed earthenware which was baked in the mediaeval kilns of Rhodes.

Hence, upon inquiring for the library, we were conducted by the Hegoumenos into a number of dark and fusty chambers, whose racks were filled only with worthless copies of the classics and Scriptures, from which no later Curzon could hope to glean the rich harvest that was all but reaped by his predecessor in 1834, the more valuable contents having either been parted with ere now or been inventoried by the State.<sup>1</sup> It was here that Robert Curzon purchased for many pieces of gold two

<sup>1</sup> In 1918, however, a member of the French Byzantine Society discovered in one of the Meteora Monasteries—hidden by some old monk in a kind of catacomb, the entrance to which was concealed by a huge oak cupboard—a cache of more than 1000 ancient Greek MSS., including mediaeval copies of Homer, Hesiod, and other Greek writers.

manuscripts of the Gospels, of great rarity and beauty, but was prevented from carrying them off by the greedy squabbles of the monks. Still, however, there reposes in the British Museum a solitary MS., the bequest of his daughter, which, according to an accompanying note from her father, had escaped the notice of the monks when they turned out his bag in the courtyard of the monastery and insisted on retrieving its two principal treasures.

Next we were shown the treasury, a smaller apartment, where a row of wooden chests contained vestments of rich old brocade, an exquisitely carved cross in olive wood, reliquaries containing sacred objects, among them the vinegar and sponge that were offered to Christ upon the Cross, and a row of silver embossed caskets, which upon being opened revealed through an aperture the brown cranium of some eminent saint or martyr, one of them being pointed out to us as the skull of the Emperor John Cantacuzene who, like Domitian and Charles V., elected in later life to exchange an Emperor's crown for the monastic cowl. The refectory of Meteora is a gloomy crypt-like apartment, with a circular stone table in an apse at the end, at which the Hegoumenos once presided ; the kitchen has a vast circular fireplace on the floor, and a domed roof with a single orifice blackened and encrusted with the soot of ages. We also saw the bakehouse, the wine-cellar, where is a portentous empty hogshead like a miniature Great Tun of Heidelberg, the guest-chamber, where we were entertained with anisette, coffee, and Turkish delight; wrote our names in both

English and Greek in the visitors' book, and were presented with a history of the monastery by the learned Polycarp, and with lithographed prints of an ancient engraving of the crag cloisters of Meteora. The Transfiguration was once the principal and wealthiest of all these monasteries, but we found it in a state of pitiable decline, and the cultured Polycarp appeared to share with two companions the monopoly of its faded splendour.

From here we went to St. Barlaam, reared in very similar fashion upon a neighbouring but even more isolated cone, whose top it completely covered. Formerly there was a bridge across the chasm that separates this rock from the mainland; but it had been destroyed, and access was only gained either by the jointed ladder apparatus, which was here longer, but less disposed to oscillate than at the Metamorphosis, or by the rope and net apparatus which descended from an even greater height, described by Curzon as 222 feet, but declared by our guide to be 340. Certainly it took double the time—a full three minutes—to ascend or descend, and the rotatory process in mid-air would not be exhilarating to a weak head. We only found two occupants of St. Barlaam (in 1834 there were fourteen), the Hegoumenos being away; and one of these, if possessed of all the monastic virtues, effectively concealed them beneath the visage of a quite uncommon desperado. The appearance of these last two surviving heirs of St. Basil was in keeping with that of their monastery, which, though once the neatest and most comely, was rapidly falling to pieces.

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Nevertheless, one or two garden plots, with flowers and fruit trees and cypress spires, still gave it an appearance which the others lacked ; while from a centre loggia or portico was a noble outlook over hill and valley. The church contained less gilding than the Great Meteora ; but the death of the sainted Ephraim, whose departure from this world appears to have been witnessed by a large congregation of admirers, was depicted upon its walls, and a silver box contained what I am not prepared to deny was the veritable hand of the great Chrysostom. Here, as at the Transfiguration, we returned the hospitality of our hosts by dropping a gold piece into the alms-box of the church, from which I do not doubt that it was very speedily extracted by the holy brethren. The library of St. Barlaam contained 1000 volumes in Robert Curzon's time, the majority of no great value ; but here, too, he had a failure, being unable to persuade the monks to part with their few treasures. Later collectors were more successful ; but the modern visitor, if he happens to be a bibliophile, need cherish no expectations.

No visitors' book was forthcoming at this monastery, and the more respectable of the two monks was very anxious that we should inscribe our names in a volume containing the official lists of previous occupants of its monastic cells. This amiable falsehood we declined to perpetrate ; and, committing ourselves once again to the tender mercies of the capstan and the net, we were pushed out over the precipice, and lowered with comfortable precision on to *terra firma*.





**MORE PAGES FROM A DIARY**



DAHABEAHS ON THE NILE

*Top ea P ss 3517 1*

# I

## ON THE NILE

Push off, and [standing] well in order smite  
The sounding furrows.

TENNYSON, *Ulysses*.

And all the way, to guide their chime,  
With falling oars they kept the time.

A. MARVELL, *Bermudas*.

THE noise comes in violent shocks of sound across the still levels of the river. A big *dahabeah* is being propelled by the standing rowers up the stream. In two lines abreast they stand to work the huge oars, and with each jerk they repeat the cry. They are standing on inclined planks, and they take three or four steps forward as they dip the long sweeps into the water, and the same number backwards as they pull through the stroke. Both movements are made to the accompaniment of a chorus chanted in unison by the crew in response to, or in repetition of a note given by the *κελευστής*, who is often himself one of their number. They do not, like the ancient Greeks, time the rowing by the *κέλευσμα*. There is little of music and not much of rhythm in the performance. They shout the loudest when the strain is hardest; and the singing is meant not to

mark the time so much as to excite and inspirit the rowers.

Presently another great *dahabeah* surges into view. It catches up the leader and they begin to race. The rival crews run forwards and backwards on the sloping planks with redoubled ardour; the air is rent with their vociferous cries; the perspiration rolls from the brows and shines on the polished skins of the straining men; and the two boats leap forward like greyhounds through the water. With a mighty effort the victory is won by one of the two competitors. As it forges ahead the shouting suddenly dies down; hoarse laughter peals across the river surface: and presently we hear only the measured dip of the two sets of oars, the victors and the vanquished, as they plunge and replunge in the silent stream.

## II

### ON THE HELLESPONT

The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration and the poet's dream.

WORDSWORTH.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds.

T. GRAY, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

AFTER exploring the ruins of Troy, we had visited the tumuli of Achilles and Patroclus, which were probably not tombs at all. We had halted at the tumulus of Ajax, to which, if this indeed be the site, Homer directly refers. Our route lay through the village of Ophrynum to Erenkeui. It was nearly half an hour before sundown. The waters of the Aegean and the Hellespont shone like aluminium in the lustrous setting of sky and sea.

Out to the west, across the smooth and glimmering surface, a golden haze appeared to swim between the farthest sea-line and the heavens, when suddenly, from this diaphanous belt of mist and light combined, a conical shape detached itself and soared into the air. By slow degrees, as the sky became more richly illumined by the dying light, and as the pink flush overspread and tinged the waters, the

outline gained in sharpness, in clearness, in beauty. The shadowy pyramid was transformed into a vast and shining form ; a girdle of amethysts encircled its waist ; the breath of beauty fanned its radiant shoulders ; its head was crowned with a diadem of rubies and pearls. It was the marble peak of Athos peering across a hundred miles of ocean.

Not for long did the fairy vision last. Presently, as the light waned, the mountain lost its shape, its sides became blurred and were merged in spectral vapours ; the lilac changed to lavender, and the lavender faded to grey ; the crimson became red, the red became rose, and the rose turned ashen-pale. Faint and yet fainter the outline dwindled until it was swallowed up in the creeping shadows, and finally disappeared altogether from view. Where but a few minutes before had been the magic of the rainbow and a glory as from the opened doors of heaven, a pall seemed to have been let down by invisible ropes from the firmament, and a dim and soundless quietude enveloped the scene.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,  
Moulded to her by deep and deeper breath,  
Neared to the hour when Beauty breathes her last,  
And knows herself in death !

### III

### DRINK

Not the first sparkle of the desert spring,  
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,  
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,  
Vie with the draught of hock and soda water.  
BYRON, *Don Juan*, Canto II., st. 180.

MANY poets of diverse nationalities, Horace, Saadi, Omar Khayyám, and, among our own countrymen, Herrick, Congreve, Burns, have sung the praise of liquor, and have commended its timely use as a factor in good fellowship or enjoyment. An interesting anthology might be, perhaps has been, composed of the glorification of wine in verse. But I have often been struck by the paucity of such references in works of travel; albeit in that sphere the occasional stimulus of drink, spirituous, alcoholic, or otherwise, is apt to be not merely a source of pleasure but an element in success. As a traveller—not the modern traveller, whose progress is punctuated by a meteoric succession of motors, trains, steamboats, and hotels—but the old-time traveller, who covered great distances on horse or mule or camelback, or maybe on foot, pushed ahead through long and exciting marches, carrying with him what-



ever he must eat or drink, how much turned on the resources of the commissariat or the contents of the canteen! When at the end of the day he sat down or lay down to take his hard-earned, and perhaps self-cooked, meal, with what beverage was he to wash it down?

If a man is marching with a caravan, where his impedimenta are carried either on the backs of animals or, as in Africa, on the heads of native porters, or, as in many parts of the East, slung on poles or from the shoulders of men; still more, if there is no limit but that of expense or supplies to the size of the party, we may be sure that the cases of wine or spirits will be there in sufficient quantity; that these will be broached at the end of the day, and that, after an exceptional spell of exertion, the corks will fly and the day's toil will be rehearsed to this merry tune. I have noticed that the French in particular, who are admirable travellers, never travel without champagne; and when I was marching in their company, in the interior of Annam and Cambodia, either tramping on foot or carried in a litter through the soaking rain, it was always a compensation to know that the Moët would be forthcoming when the day's labour was over and the halt was called. And even in older records of sport and adventure, when comfort was less diffused and the standard of relaxation more strict, we find that the veteran explorer, a Stanley or a Baker, was never without these resources, to be used on rare occasions either to celebrate achievement, or for medicinal purposes, or to overcome fatigue.

I incline, however, to the belief that the reason for which so little mention is made of this legitimate solace in travel pages is that the traveller likes to credit himself with an endurance even more Spartan than is justified by the facts. But supposing he is either moving too quickly or with too small a following to be able to indulge in such luxuries; supposing, for instance—to take two opposite extremes—he is either riding *chapar* in Persia, seventy miles or more a day on hired horses, or is climbing Everest or making a dash for the Pole, what is he to do? He has, of course, his flask of brandy or whisky, or whatever spirit he may prefer. But beyond that, he must live in anticipation of the good time that is to come. For him are the joys, not of fruition, but of hope.

But how great these are, and what varied forms they may assume! One man will dream of one type of future enjoyment for his thirsting gullet, another of another. I once asked Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian explorer, who cut in ahead of our brave Scott and his companions and got first to the South Pole, what was the particular food or drink that filled his imagination during that fearful ordeal, or would have pleased him most had he suddenly been able to conjure it into existence. He replied that all the while he was longing for a cup of hot coffee and a plate of bread and butter.

Lord Byron, whom I have quoted at the head of this chapter, would apparently have called for hock and soda (I believe, by the way, the above to be the first mention of soda water in English verse)—and

there is something to be said for his selection. But for the traveller in remote parts, who cannot be burdened with over-heavy loads, the double ingredients may be too bulky to carry, while they suggest, even in imagination, rather too diletante a drink.

If I may relate my own humble experience, when I was galloping for nine long days from Meshed to Teheran, getting up in the darkness of the night long before sunrise, and riding through the heat of the day, with no more liquid than the contents of a flask in one of my holsters, I used to think fondly of the prospective amenities of the British Legation, and to murmur to myself the magic incantation: "Wolff's Champagne."<sup>1</sup> When at length I rode exhausted into the Legation Compound, and a friendly secretary asked me what I would like, I answered without the slightest hesitation, "Wolff's Champagne." And I got it!

During my travels in the Pamirs in 1894, I had run out of liquor altogether, and sometimes felt the want of some stimulant in face of the cruel cold at night and in the early dawn, and of the scorching sun at noontide. Finally I turned back towards India, crossed the shallow trough of the Baroghil Pass, and came down on the upper waters of the Yarkhun River, which in its later course is variously known as the Mastuj, Chitral, and Kunar River, and eventually flows into the Kabul River at Jellalabad. Opposite me gleamed the frozen cataract of the

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Drummond Wolff, whose guest I was to be, was at that time the British Minister at Teheran.

Great Chatiboi glacier, just as though some vast Niagara, pouring down from the skies, had suddenly been congealed in its descent, and converted into pinnacles and towers of ice. I was expecting to join my friend Younghusband, and to march with him to Chitral. But I felt sure that as soon as I crossed the frontier and entered the territory of British India, he would send out some one to meet me and guide me to his camp.

Sure enough, as I rode down the grassy slopes, I saw coming towards me in the distance the figure of a solitary horseman. It was Younghusband's native servant. At that moment I would have given a kingdom, not for champagne or hock and soda, or hot coffee, but for a glass of beer! He approached and salaamed. I uttered but one word, "Beer." Without a moment's hesitation, he put his hand in the fold of his tunic and drew therefrom a bottle of Bass. Happy forethought! O Prince of hosts! Most glorious moment! Even now, at this distance of time, it shines like a ruddy beacon in the retrospect of thirty years gone by.

Furthermore, in this belated tribute have I not done something to remove the stigma of another British poet?

O Beer, O Hodgson, Guinness, Allsop, Bass!  
Names that should be on every infant's tongue,  
Shall days and months and years and centuries pass,  
And still your merits be unrecked, unsung?

No, Calverley, no! Let me, at any rate, be innocent of your hitherto well-merited reproach! My withers shall remain for ever unwrung!

## IV

### A DUEL

Honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? no.

SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry IV.*, Part I. Act V. Sc. 1.

I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more.

RICHARD LOVELACE, *To Lucasta*.

WE had foregathered at Jerusalem. It was a quite accidental combination. Five young men, drawn to Palestine by the lure of travel, bent upon seeing and enjoying all that they could. They included a wealthy young American, two English clergymen, one of them a curate in the East End of London, a Harvard student from U.S.A., and a young English traveller, to wit, myself. We had abundance of spirits, sound health, no cares, and a passion to explore and to enjoy. It was in the year 1883.

We saw and did all the familiar and some unfamiliar things in Palestine. We bathed in the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee. Making the trip to Jericho, we assisted in a native fantasia organised there in honour of J. M. Cook, the head of the famous firm of Thomas Cook & Sons, who was just





DAMASCUS

*Exch. - A. 1954. 11. 11*

then opening up Palestine as an area of his agencies, and whom we saw hoisted round the camp at night with a torchlight procession by a crowd of shrieking Arabs, grateful for the anticipated fall of manna in the wilderness which he was expected to ensure. I doubt if Jericho had seen any more curious sight since its walls fell down some considerable time ago.

Together we climbed Ebal and Gerizim, Tabor and Carmel. Together we bought exquisitely enamelled tiles at Damascus, having a raffle and casting dice for four lovely pieces, because none of us had the money to buy the lot except the American, who, of course, won the competition. Together we were photographed on horseback on the great stone, partially hewn, but still unsevered from its quarry bed, at Baalbek.

At Beyrout we took passage in a densely crowded Austrian Lloyd boat, where we five were crammed into a single cabin of small dimensions. The etiquette of behaviour on this boat was prescribed by the following polite admonition, which was posted in more than one conspicuous place in the ship :

Passengers having a right to be treated like persons of education will, no doubt, conform themselves to the rules of good society by respecting their fellow-travellers, and paying a due regard to the fair sex.

Being young and gallant, we endeavoured faithfully to observe both parts of this injunction. But we avenged ourselves on the Company which had incarcerated us in this marine Black Hole in the following ingenious fashion. The American student



had a very good tenor voice, and had been a chorus-leader at Harvard, of all the songs and chants of which admirable institution he was an acknowledged master. Nightly, our party, known as the Goats—in contradistinction to the remainder of the passengers, whose higher level of picty and decorum entitled them to be called the Shecp—gave an open-air concert on deck, of which the most popular feature was an American student song (sung to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne”), each verse being given out in advance by the Choragus, and then shouted in lusty unison by the entire audience. I remember some verses of this jovial lay.

There was a farmer had two sons,  
And these two sons were brothers !  
Josephus was the eldest's name,  
Bohuncus was the other's.

Now these two boys had suits of clothes  
They bought for Easter Sunday ;  
Josephus wore his all the week,  
Bohuncus on the Monday.

Now these two boys had an old horse,  
And this old horse was blind ;  
Josephus rode him up before,  
Bohuncus down behind.

Now these two brothers died at last,  
It grieves me sore to tell,  
Josephus up to heaven went,  
Bohuncus down to ——.

This finale was yelled with extreme gusto by every one on board, except the missionaries, who usually retired before the climax was reached.

Our revenge upon the Company was effected by the introduction nightly of an improvised stanza reflecting upon the scant hospitality of the vessel and the disgraceful overcrowding of which we were the victims. I recall one of these verses :

These brothers sailed in an Austrian Lloyd,  
They never will again !  
Josephus had five in his berth,  
Bohuncus was with ten.

Other verses were even more calumnious.

At Rhodes, an enchanting place, we wondered how any one could ever have imagined that the famous bronze Colossus actually straddled across the mouth of the harbour, which is several hundred yards in width, so that sailing ships were said to have entered between his legs. Even our own Shakspeare may have shared the popular illusion when he wrote :

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs.

The error was the more inexplicable since the shattered fragments of the Colossus, after its overthrow by an earthquake, lay for nearly nine hundred years on the ground on one side of the entrance, where it had fallen.

From Smyrna we chartered a special train to visit the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the patient explorer of which, Mr. Wood, I afterwards met at Constantinople.

Landing at Chanak on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont—destined more than thirty years later

to be a name of such grave portent to British arms—we investigated the sites of Bounarbashi and Hissarlik, rival claimants to the title of “Windy Troy”, and had little hesitation in pronouncing in favour of Schliemann’s hypothesis; although it was difficult either to imagine the relatively insignificant mound of Hissarlik, not eighty feet in height—notwithstanding that it was the site of seven superimposed cities—as once crowned with the “topless towers of Ilium”, or to believe, with a later poet than Marlowe, that here,

Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

At Constantinople we saw all the sights. We visited the mosques; we attended the mid-day service at St. Sofia and gazed from a gallery at the long line of worshippers far down below, bending to and fro, bowing, kneeling, and touching the ground with their foreheads, with almost machine-like regularity, while the deep tones of the Iman rang through the vaulted spaces, and the wild and dissonant responses of the readers in the *dikka*, or reading pulpit, filled the dome with strange and long-drawn echoes. We saw the Dancing Dervishes at Galata, and the Howling Dervishes at Scutari (not by any means the only ones I have met), where also the prostrate forms of the worshippers, including tiny children, were walked upon by the Iman, an individual of no mean size; we rowed up the Golden Horn, and we rode round the Byzantine walls of the Old City; we attended the Selamlık and saw the cowering form of Abdul Hamid in his phaeton, fenced in with mounted guards; and of course we chaffered in the bazaars.

At Constantinople we separated, to return to England by different routes. But hereby hangs my little tale, which gives its title to this slender excerpt from a forgotten diary. The quintet who had journeyed so long and so happily together, but whose ways in life were henceforward to be so divergent, entered into a solemn pledge to meet in the East End of London at the hospitable board of one of the two clergymen on a given date in June. No engagement, however important, no counter-attraction, however great, was to induce any one of the five to abstain from the tryst. He was to suffer all the penalties of the damned if he were to fail.

On the appointed day in June four of us assembled at the luncheon-table of the cleric. But the gay American was absent; nor had any letter or telegram been received from him to explain or excuse his defalcation. We drank his health, but condemned his desertion.

Some weeks later he walked into my lodgings in London. I seized him warmly by the hand, only to elicit a long and excruciating howl of pain. Then for the first time I observed that his right arm was bound to his side. Upon my inquiring what had befallen him to account for his shocking breach of trust, he replied that on that very day he had been engaged in fighting a duel, from which he had emerged the vanquished. He told me the story. From Constantinople he had drifted to Paris, where, being in a dancing-saloon with a lady partner at midnight, he had had an encounter with an insolent Frenchman, who had mistaken him for an English-

man—we were not very popular in Paris at that time—and had gratuitously picked a quarrel with him. The Frenchman had trodden deliberately upon the dress of the lady; whereupon the American squire, resenting the affront, had charged the Frenchman with having intentionally besmirched the skirts of his companion. The insolent Frenchman had replied that the dress of the lady could not be more soiled than was her character, upon which the intrepid American had at once, and very properly, knocked him down.

This was of course followed by a challenge to a duel, and my American friend, who had never held a rapier or fired a shot in anger in his life, found himself committed to this unwelcome form of encounter. The choice of arms fell to his opponent, who naturally selected the weapon with which his countrymen were most familiar. The place of combat was fixed for a spot just across the frontier in the territories either of Belgium or Luxemburg—I forget which. My friend spent the short interval in taking lessons in the *escrime*, but he had not advanced far in his studies when the fatal day arrived. His fencing master, who might have been a pupil of Dr. Johnson,<sup>1</sup> had, however, advised him to make up for any lack of science or skill by dashing in, and if possible wounding his adversary before the latter had realised the nature of the assault. This was, I believe, the

<sup>1</sup> “When a duel begins it is supposed there may be an equality; because it is not always skill that prevails. It depends much on presence of mind, nay, on accidents. The wind may be in a man’s face. He may fall. Many such things may decide the superiority” (*Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, by J. Boswell, September 19, 1773).

plan which, some years later, enabled the worthy French Premier, M. Floquet, to get the better of that fiery Napoleon of the music-halls, General Boulanger, in the duel to which the latter had challenged him. The civilian pricked the soldier in the face before the latter knew where he was ; and from that hour the fate of the adventurer may be said to have been sealed.

My American friend contemplated a similar manoeuvre. He described to me the scene in a pine-wood, the measured ground, the attendant seconds, the opening formalities, his own desperate trepidation. When the signal was given he rushed in with a terrific lunge. But, as he explained to me, his next, and that an immediate sensation, was finding his opponent's weapon sticking right through his right arm between the shoulder and the elbow. The duel was over, honour was satisfied ; the heroes of this idiotic drama shook hands ; and my friend returned to Paris to be nursed of his wound.

Hence his failure to attend the reunion banquet in the East End of London. My poor friend must have been predestined to disaster, for he was drowned a little while later, when bathing off the Mexican coast.

## V

### DISCOVERIES

We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

COLERIDGE, *Ancient Mariner*.

And things are not what they seem.

LONGFELLOW, *Psalm of Life*.

It is quite a mistake to suppose that the era of discovery is over, and that no more secrets of history or nature are to be wrested from the face of the earth by the observant pilgrim. Travel is still the science of the unexpected and the unknown, at least to those who know how to pursue it; and it is far from necessary to go either to Lhasa or Timbuctoo in order to learn things that one has never previously imagined, or to see sights of uncommon novelty and interest.

In the course of many years of travel, I never made so many discoveries as during the first journey that I took, when a very young man, to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. There seemed, indeed, to be something in the atmosphere of those countries that was peculiarly favourable to this sort of exploration; and I can still recall the delight with which day after day I saw new planets swim into my ken—

planets of the very existence or place of which in the geographical firmament I had not previously been aware.

I had received some measure of preparation for my subsequent discoveries by a preliminary tour in Egypt, where, from the day on which I landed, these experiences began. Thus at Alexandria, where I had always been led to believe that the great Pompey had been murdered and his body left exposed on the beach, I made the immediate discovery that Pompey's Pillar had nothing to do with the real Pompey, but was an old Egyptian shaft fitted with a capital and base of inferior classical design by another and obscure Pompey, two hundred and fifty years later, in honour of the Emperor Diocletian. This did not disturb me greatly; because I had already realised that Cleopatra's two needles, one of which had been transferred to America and the other to London, had never been threaded by that fascinating lady, and had, indeed, been set up at least 1300 years before she was born. And if Cleopatra was to be made the victim of a clumsy lie, why not Pompey also?

But my discoveries about Cleopatra did not end here; for when I saw her portrait, carved on the back wall of the Temple of Denderah, I realised either that her beauty must have been as great a mystery as that of Mary Queen of Scots, or else that the Egyptian portrait-sculptors of the day were very inferior artists (probably this particular artist never saw the Queen, and produced a merely conventional profile), or that the recorded history of her triumphs



must be a myth. Anyhow, it was a discovery ; although it did not alter my personal conviction that Cleopatra was a very beautiful woman, that her skin was white, whether her hair was light or dark, and that her features were pure Greek (why, indeed, seeing that she came of a Greek stock who propagated the race by close intermarriage, should she have been anything else ?), and that the woman who beguiled both Cæsar and Antony, ruining the one and very nearly ruining the other, was worthy of her achievements.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch declared that her beauty was not exceptional, but that her charms were irresistible. Shakspeare, who was very uncertain about the complexion of African peoples (*e.g.* Othello) described her as "tawny" and as "a gipsy." Her face on contemporary coins and in the uncertain British Museum bust does not suggest great beauty.

I have often wondered why the last scene but one in Cleopatra's life has not been made the subject of some great artist's brush. Alexandria had fallen to the arms of Octavian ; the Queen had retired to the Monument or Tower near to the Temple of Isis, where she had stored her treasure and which was her last place of refuge ; Antony, who, on receiving a false rumour of her death, had stabbed himself and was a dying man, asked, when he heard that Cleopatra still lived, to be taken to her. He was carried thither in the arms of his servants. Let Plutarch describe the remainder of the scene :

"Cleopatra would not suffer the door to be opened ; but a cord being let down from the window, Antony was fastened to it, and she, with her two women (Iras and Charmian) drew him up. Nothing, as they who were present observed, could possibly be more affecting than that spectacle. Antony covered with blood and in the agonies of death, hoisted up by a rope, and stretching out his hands to Cleopatra, while he was suspended for a considerable time in the air. For it was with the greatest difficulty they drew him up, though Cleopatra herself exerted all her strength, straining every nerve, and distorting every feature with the violence of the effort ; while those who stood below endeavoured to animate and encourage her, and seemed to partake in all the toil and all the emotions that she felt. When she had drawn him up and laid him on a bed, as she stood over him she rent her clothes, beat and wounded her breast, and, wiping the blood from his disfigured countenance, called him her lord, her emperor, her husband."

Furthermore, I comforted myself by the reflection that the Egyptian atmosphere had never been very favourable to truth. In the book of Exodus there are traces of exaggeration, if not worse. Herodotus, the Father of History, had made some startling discoveries in Egypt and had been told a good many lies by the Egyptians; he had also himself told a few more, and perhaps this had set the ball rolling; so that Egypt had acquired a reputation in these respects which it was necessary to sustain, and which, I am bound to say, its inhabitants up to the latest hour have never done anything to impair.

From that time forward I never felt or expressed astonishment at any discovery of the kind which I was fortunate enough to make, but merely recorded it with delight in my note-book. For instance, when I came to Assouan I found with no surprise that the First Cataract of the Nile, even as it then existed, was not a cataract at all, but only a rapid a few yards wide, with a fall in 150 yards of not more than six or seven feet. But then Herodotus also made a discovery about this same cataract;

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I have given Langhorne's translation rather than that of Sir Thomas North, because, though less picturesque, it is closer to the original.

Shakspeare, it is true, basing himself on Plutarch, has faithfully reproduced this scene, with such literary embellishments as only Shakspeare could add. But what a subject for the painter's art—first the ascent, and then the death-scene—the dying man and the doomed woman exchanging the last agonies of defeat and impending separation, the embraces for which he had ruined himself and bartered an Empire, but which have made their guilty love a *κτῆμα εἰς δαί*! She was thirty-nine—he was fifty-three, a year younger than Caesar had been when the latter first became her lover, eighteen years before.

for hereabouts were his two famous hills of Croph and Mophi, between which lay the unfathomable fountains of the Nile.

It was not, however, till I passed on to Palestine and Syria that I realised that there the real field of original discovery lay. Already I knew enough to be aware that the roses of Sharon were not roses, that the Palestine lilies of the field which "toiled not neither did they spin" were not lilies, and that the milk and honey with which the country was reported to flow, were neither the produce of the cow nor the manufacture of the bee. But this knowledge was nothing to that which I was destined in a few weeks to acquire.

Some of these discoveries were quite innocent, and were no doubt the result of culpable previous ignorance on my own part. For instance, when I climbed to the Place of Sacrifice on Mount Carmel, which I had fondly imagined to be a grassy eminence on the summit of a lofty hill overlooking the Mediterranean, whence the servant of the prophet saw arising "a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand," it was a genuine discovery to learn that the actual site (which cannot, I believe, be disputed) was at the south-east and landward extremity of a ridge, twelve miles long, from which neither Haifa nor Acre could be seen, and where only a little patch of sea was visible to the west and south at the distance of many miles.

Again I had been a good deal disappointed with the sight of the River Jordan, which I crossed at Jericho without dismounting from my horse—it was

little larger than a brook. But I waited for Damascus, knowing that Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were better than all the waters of Israel. That they might easily be, though I found them to be only swift but narrow snow-fed rivulets, flowing through the town to which they supply water for every use. Even when I read my Kinglake, whom I believed to be a truthful man, I hardly recovered my confidence:

This Holy Damascus, this "Earthly Paradise" of the Prophet, so fair to the eyes that he dared not trust himself to tarry in her blissful shades, she is a city of hidden palaces, of copses, and gardens, and fountains, and bubbling streams. The juice of her lips is the gushing and ice-cold torrent that tumbles from the snowy sides of Anti-Lebanon. Close along on the river's edge, through seven sweet miles of rustling boughs and deepest shade, the city spreads out her whole length; as a man falls flat, face forward, on the brook that he may drink and drink again, so Damascus, thirsting for ever, lies down with her lips to the stream and clings to its rushing waters.

I always thought this very beautiful. But I found that the beauty lay in the exquisite music of *Eothen* rather than in the scene itself.

It was, however, in respect of the established sacred sites that my more exciting discoveries lay. I experienced no surprise, indeed, at learning that there is hardly a place or scene in the Old or New Testament which has not been identified with scrupulous accuracy. Thus, to see the House of Joseph, or the Tomb of the Virgin, or the Sarcophagus of David, or the burial-place of Nicodemus,

or the home of the kindly man by whom Paul was let down in a basket and who is known as George the Porter, or even the spot where the cock crew to Peter, were sensations that might well have been foreseen. Nor, when I came to the Moslem Sacred Sites, was I greatly startled to be shown the round hole in the rock, inside the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, through which Mohammed rose to heaven on the back of his athletic steed, or even the fragments of the saddle which that animal bore, although this saddle was rather unexpectedly made of marble. Further, I had not known beforehand that the rock itself was only prevented from following the Prophet in his aerial flight by the special intervention of the Archangel Gabriel, whose finger-prints are still visible where he held it down.

But what I had altogether failed to anticipate was that the most famous men of the Scriptures, with an admirable regard for the convenience of posterity, should have concentrated their main activities on approximately the same site or sites. Thus, after I had exhausted the sights of the Holy Sepulchre, it was a great relief to know that without leaving the building I could see both the grave of Adam, who, I thought, had ended his days at some considerable distance, and the place where Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac; whilst in the dome of the rock Mohammed had struck his head against the ceiling so hard that he left an unmistakable impression side by side with the place—also unmistakable—where David and Solomon had prayed.

All these discoveries, however, paled before the

realisation that in Palestine and Syria men could be buried several times over without exciting any surprise. It is true that I had read in England of two, if not three, well-attested skulls of Oliver Cromwell, and that I was familiar with the explanation given by the owner of one of these to the visitor who complained that he had already seen the skull of the Protector elsewhere, and that it was a good deal bigger. "Oh, but our skull", had been the reply, "was the skull of Oliver Cromwell when he was a little boy."

I was therefore prepared for some uncertainty about the relics of the dead. Moreover, I realised that there might be some reason for a double record in the case of Lazarus, whose tomb I encountered first at Bethany, and afterwards at Larnaka in Cyprus. Again, we know that John the Baptist was beheaded; which may explain how it came about that I saw the mausoleum of his body at Samaria, and of his head at Damascus. But it did not explain how, on another occasion, I came across the greater part of his remains at Genoa in Italy. The Virgin Mary had also two graves, one in the Garden of Gethsemane, and another at Ephesus (with the tomb of St. John thrown in). But the hero of the greatest achievement was undoubtedly Noah. It is true that history contains no record of the stages by which he trekked from Ararat to the Holy Land. But let that pass—for it was only a minor discovery in comparison with others. I had, I thought, already left him safely buried at Hebron, when later on, in the neighbourhood of Baalbek, I came upon

him again ; and this time he was interred in a tomb forty yards long by two or three feet wide, thereby throwing an entirely new light upon the methods by which he may have escaped the Flood, without ever building or entering the Ark. Noah must, as I say, have been a person of exceptional stature, even in a part of the world where the Sons of Anak, " which come of the giants ", and compared with whom all other men " were as grasshoppers ", would appear to have abounded. But even in his day the standard of human height must have been rapidly deteriorating ; for the grave of Eve, near Jeddah in the Hejaz, which corresponds accurately to the dimensions of her body, is no less than 173 yards long by 12 yards wide ; so that compared with the ancestral Mother of Mankind, the builder of the Ark was only a pigmy. At Jeddah, however, the guardians of her tomb have a ready and indeed a plausible explanation of this decline, for they say that when Eve fell, with her fell the stature of the race which she originated.

Such are a few only of the manifold and gratifying discoveries that I made while journeying on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean forty years ago ; and though I have never in any of my subsequent wanderings maintained the same high level of accomplishment, they justify me, I think, in claiming that travel, even in modern times, is still capable of adding immensely, and sometimes unexpectedly, to the sum total of human knowledge.

## VI

### THE LIVING KING

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,  
All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam,  
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes :  
I am one with the twilight's dream.

A. E.

MOST perfect and most graceful among the ruins of Samarkand is the cluster of mosques and mausoleums that bear the name of Shah Zindeh, the Living King. Their walls and groined ceilings are still aglow with the pageantry of the ancient tiles—ultramarine and sapphire and orange and puce, crusted over with a rich siliceous glaze, and inscribed with mighty Kufic letters. In the innermost chamber lies the coffin of the Living King, who when he lived was a near relative of the Prophet, but suffered martyrdom by decapitation in long forgotten times. The mausoleum is ascended by steps that climb the slope of a bare and sandy hill.

Standing on the summit at the day's ending, I am a witness to one of those amazing sunsets known only in the East, when for a few seconds the earth is suffused with "the light that never was on sea or land", and then, amid a hush as of death, the twi-



light rushes down with violet wings and all nature swoons in her embrace. In the short space of præternatural luminousness that precedes, the serrated edge of the Penjacent mountains cuts the sky like blue steel, and seems to sever the Zerafshan valley from the outer world. Inside the magic circle described by their lofty shapes, a splendid belt of trees plunges suddenly into a deeper and more solemn green, contrasting vividly with the purple of the mountain background.

The middle space is filled by the colossal arches and riven domes of the mosque of Bibi Khanum, "the chief wife of the Great Lord" (Timor or Tamerlane) as she was called by the Spanish Ambassador, Don Ruy de Clavijo, five centuries ago.

Gone and forgotten is she, and tottering and ruined are they, although from a distance they can be seen towering high above all the other monuments of Samarkand. Below and all around the mosque of the Living King, a waste of grey sand-hills is encumbered with the half-fallen tombstones and mouldering graves of those who have sought interment in that holy company. Here and there a horse-hair plume, floating from the end of a rickety pole, betrays the last resting-place of some nameless sheikh or saint.

In the last death-throes of the daylight, a band of turquoise blue is seen to encircle the horizon and to flush upwards towards the zenith, where light amber skeins hang entangled like the filaments of a golden veil. As these drift apart and lose the transient glory, as the turquoise deepens into sapphire, and dies down into dusk ; as first the belt of trees and

then the outer belt of mountains is wiped out, a long cry trembles through the breathless void. It is the voice of the muezzin from the balcony of a neighbouring minaret, summoning the faithful to evening prayer.

## VII

### GREECE IN THE 'EIGHTIES

Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathed around,  
Every shade and hallowed fountain  
Murmured deep a solemn sound.

T. GRAY, *The Progress of Poesy*.

FORTY-THREE years ago four English travellers rode through the hills and valleys of inland Greece. All were fresh from the University or the College. One was a Senior Classic and a future Bishop. The second was a future Headmaster of Haileybury and Eton. The third was an Eton Master and future Vice-Provost of the College. The fourth was a young Oxford Graduate who had just taken his degree. Their names were J. E. C. Welldon, Edward Lyttelton, F. E. Cornish, and G. N. Curzon.

I suppose that we had much the same experience as other travellers who toured through Greece at that time, with perhaps two differences; first, that Edward Lyttelton was discovered to be the nephew of Mr. Gladstone, and that our trip in consequence became a sort of triumphal progress, as I shall presently relate; and secondly, that the Greece we were exploring was not in our eyes the Greece of

King George, though he was at that time on its throne, so much as it was the Greece of Homer and Herodotus, of Pericles and Phidias, of Aeschylus and Sophocles, of Aristotle and Plato. Thucydides and not Baedeker was our guide; we opened our Sophocles a dozen times for every once that we glanced at Mahaffy.<sup>1</sup> When we drove to Marathon we plotted out every detail of the battle that had been fought 2800 years earlier, but we did not trouble much about the poor Englishmen who had been captured (and in one case murdered) by Greek brigands on this very road only twelve years before. When we went down to Salamis, we spent an hour in disputing on which "rocky brow" was placed the throne of Xerxes. When we climbed Acrocorinthos, we found a greater magic in the fountain of Pirene, where, if I remember rightly, Bellerophon seized Pegasus as he was quenching his thirst, than we did in the view of the Corinth Canal.

Pericles was our companion on the Acropolis and the Arcopagus even more than Paul, and after Paul no one seemed to matter. We were never more thrilled than when, after leaving Arakhova we came to the famous *σχίστη ὁδός*, that fork in the hill road where Laius in his chariot met his death at the hand of his unknown and unknowing son.<sup>2</sup>

At Athens we were fortunate in meeting a number of distinguished persons. M. Tricoupis, the Prime Minister, struck us as a capable and patriotic statesman, and was certainly a most attractive man. Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Studies and Rambles in Greece.*

<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus.*

Schliemann, who had made a fortune at Nijni-Novgorod in tea and indigo, and was reputed to be worth £10,000 a year, was living with his young Greek wife in a fine house which he had built and entitled τὸ Ἰλίου Μέργαρον, where he had a butler called Rhadamanthus. He was himself a short, uneasy-eyed, ugly little man, his hair shaven close to a bullety head, a grizzling moustache on his upper lip, and a collapsible figure. His conversation was without interest or imagination; but he was evidently, as his career showed, a man of stern will and inflexible purpose. He told me that, though a German by birth, he had yet written his books on Troy and Mycenae in English, and afterwards had had them translated back into the German tongue. There was also in Athens at the time the well-known American scholar and grammarian, Professor Goodwin, of whom I find recorded in my diary the following pen portrait: "The terror of erring schoolboys, the paragon of every social virtue. In his bland exterior, handsome face, voluble delivery, and ceaseless flow of commonplace, one would not detect the acute scholar, the giant of syntax, the great formulator of the Greek *μή*. The excessive charm of his manner could never fail to captivate; his affability nothing could disturb; but his gift of monopolising the conversation, and then turning it on to the most threadbare topics, the same stories being repeated at intervals of two days, would wear out the temper of a Moses and exhaust the patience of a Job."

We attended a debate in the Βουλή, or Chamber, on the tobacco tax. But I am ashamed to say that

after listening to three-quarters of an hour of Hellenic eloquence, not even the presence in our company of a Senior Classic enabled us to identify in the modern Greek pronunciation a single word but *ἀλλά* —“but”. Perhaps this was due to our absorption in the past, which was perpetually finding unpremeditated illustrations. For instance, when our guide told us that a great marble chair or *cathedra* which we saw in the interior of the Parthenon, belonged to the Athenian House of Lords, and had only been moved there when that institution was abolished, we felt not the faintest interest in this rather remarkable incident, until we realised that the Second Chamber in question was the old Court of the Arcopagus. When the same mentor pointed to a dusty valley, which was threaded by the channel of an exhausted rivulet and told us that there were the Elysian Fields, we expressed neither satisfaction nor surprise, until we discovered that he was speaking of the

Fields that cool Ilissus laves.

And when he told us that the statue of Pallas Athene, which once stood in the Erechtheum, was so like a human being that it was said to have fallen from heaven, we thought less of its celestial origin than we did of its human sculptor.

Byron's “Maid of Athens” was reputed to have ended by marrying a policeman; and even Byron's verses experienced no better fate at our hands, as compared with the least line of the great Attic tragedians. The only point in which, at the end

of our tour, we agreed that the modern Greek showed a superior intelligence to the old Greek was in his substituting for the fine masculine word ἵππος (horse), the neuter τὸ ἄλογον "the unreasoning one," an epithet which appeared to us to describe with perfect accuracy the animals that we bestrode, and of which I recorded in my diary that the only paces of which they were cognisant were "a slow and imperturbable walk, an occasional but jolling trot, a spasmodic and agonising canter, but, as for a gallop, an obstinate and incomplete incapacity."

It was, however, when we left Athens, huddled, so to speak, under the umbrella of Mr. Gladstone, with Edward Lyttelton as our standard bearer, and with telegrams from Monsieur Tricoupis flying about to the nomarch of every district and the demarch of every town, bidding them extend a special welcome to the relatives of that illustrious man, equally the resuscitator of ancient and the friend of modern Greece, that our real triumphs began. Even now, at this distance of time, I can see the crowds on the quay at Nauplia and the military escort to the so-called hotel; the deputation from the aldermen and magistrates, the municipal authorities and the local Bench and Bar; Edward Lyttelton, in knickerbockers and fives shoes, rising from our humble and half-finished dinner to address the delegation in mediocre and metallic French; the receptions and dinners and entertainments at Argos and Mycenae; the cries everywhere of Ζήτω ὁ Γλάδστων and Ζήτω τὸ Ἀγγλικὸν ἔθνος the landing at Itea on the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth, in order to make the







DELPHI

*Underwood Press Service.*

ascent to Delphi; the noisy reception by the massed school children at Crissa; the bonfires on the hills at night, the address from the Mayor and corporation of Kastri (the modern name of Delphi) in which our dragoman, who always translated the modern Greek into English through the medium of Italian, converted the ὁ εὐγενέστατος ξένος of the Mayor through the Italian equivalent of *O ingenui forestieri* into the English "O ingenuous foresters!"

The entry to Delphi was really the culminating scene. For there was produced a veteran of eighty or more years of age who had acted as guide to Mr. Gladstone when he climbed Parnassus in the year 1856: there was also produced an aged white horse, upon which it was alleged that that renowned ascent had been made. Mounted upon this venerable steed, and followed by the rest of the party on the humbler backs of mules, Lyttelton headed our procession into the ancient shrine of Apollo. First came our rather meagre cavalcade, the white horse leading with becoming gravity, and the bells on the mules tinkling bravely in the crisp air; next came the village musicians, whose instruments consisted of a melancholy pipe and a solitary drum; then the Reception Committee in loose order; next our dragoman and grinning cook, and finally two gendarmes as an evidence of the might and majesty of the Hellenic Government. As we passed along the single street of the village the old women, the matrons, and the children looked down from the crazy wooden balconies, waving their hands or mumbling blessings: the adult population in the

street pressed pomegranates and apples into our hands.

We did not, as a matter of fact, consult the oracle, which has maintained an impenetrable silence for some centuries ; but even supposing that the Pythian priestess had spoken from her tripod, with her customary and unexampled command of the *double entendre*, she could not have sent us away from Delphi more contented than we were with our rustic but warm-hearted welcome.

## VIII

### THE INTERPRETER

Traduttori traditori.

Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two.

R. B. SHERIDAN, *The Critic*, Act I. Sc. 2.

GREAT are the advantages of being able to speak to a foreigner in his own tongue—maybe only in this way can true comprehension be attained. But of no mean benefit is it sometimes to be so ignorant of the language of the other party to the conversation as to require the aid of an interpreter; never more so than when the ideas and idioms of the two parties differ so radically as to transcend the suasion of a common medium of expression, and when the contributions of each to the dialogue require to be adapted in transmission to the mode of thought or the understanding of the other. In interviews with Eastern potentates and peoples, I have often profited by the interpreter's artful aid. While the other man is speaking, you can watch with curious interest the movement of his lips, the expression of his face, the tone of his voice. You wonder, at times even you correctly guess, what he is saying.

Then, while it is being slowly translated, time is given you to meditate the becoming reply. Further, while it is being passed on, you can watch the effect of your answer as it is unfolded word by word. There is also the delicious element of doubt as to whether the interpreter is really reproducing, with anything like fidelity, either what the other man says to you, or what you desire to say to him, with the certainty (at least in Eastern countries, where forms are important and hyperbole abounds) that he is doing nothing of the sort. Rather is he probably clothing your inept or imperfect phraseology with the glowing mantle of Oriental compliment, and quite possibly saying something entirely different from what you had entrusted him to say.

I remember hearing of one Indian Prince who when entertaining, as was his annual wont, a large party of English guests—whom his caste precluded him from joining at table, but to whom he desired through the medium of the British Resident to extend a hospitable welcome before they proceeded to the banquet—said in Hindustani to the latter: “Tell the ladies I hope that they will fill their bellies!” The tactful but unsuspecting officer at once translated this as follows: “Ladies and gentleman, His Highness hopes very much that you will enjoy your dinner.” But, unhappily, His Highness, who was by nature *méchant*, also knew enough of English to realise that he was not being quite correctly reproduced; whereupon, in tones of thunder, he ejaculated, “No, I did not say that: I told the ladies to fill their bellies!”

This was an illustration not of employing an interpreter but of the interpreter consenting to be, so to speak, checked and overhauled—a handicap which ought never to be permitted.

The case, however, in my own experience, in which an Oriental Prince to whom I was presented, most successfully disposed of the need either of employing an interpreter or of conversing with a foreigner at all, was the following: being bored by the prospect of giving an audience to a traveller from a foreign land, he made up his mind to cut the interview as short as possible. Accordingly, French being the diplomatic language of his Court, the potentate would inquire, with apparently great cordiality, of the European traveller: “*Parlez-vous français ?*” If the stranger in reply regretted his ignorance of that tongue, the Prince, with a gesture of disappointment and almost of despair, would close the audience forthwith; leaving it to be inferred that, but for the stupidity of the other party, they might have had a delightful conversation. If, on the other hand, the foreigner replied, “*Mais oui, Monseigneur,*” the Prince was equally ready. Like a pistol shot came his rejoinder: “*Moi, non,*” and a salutation of farewells.

Perhaps he was wise not to indulge in the experiment of conversing in a strange language; anyhow he escaped the fate that befell a worthy prelate of the Church of England who, on the occasion of a visit to the front during the Great War, decided to speak some words of encouragement to the French soldiers. After a moment’s meditation he summed

up his excellent intentions with the curt benediction: "Que Dieu vous bless(e)."

A Viceroy's path may conceivably be strewn with similar pitfalls. One of my predecessors, though endowed with many graces, did not include among them either an accurate knowledge or a correct pronunciation of the French tongue. Nevertheless, on the occasion of a visit to the French settlement of Chandernagore, a little higher up the river than Calcutta, he was received with much honour by the French Governor and the small population; after listening to a flattering address in French from the former, he strove to return the compliment by replying in the same tongue.

His staff listened with due reverence to the efforts of their Chief: but they are alleged to have scarcely retained their gravity when the Governor, after listening with solemnity to the allocution, beckoned to his Hindustani interpreter and asked him to translate His Excellency's remarks!

I once suffered while in India from lack of such timely assistance. In arranging for the Delhi Durbar, I invited a number of Allied and friendly Asiatic states to depute representatives to the Assembly. The Japanese Government sent a very distinguished General, with whom I had two interviews at Viceregal Lodge, one at the outset and the other at the close of the proceedings. The General had sent me a message to say that, being acquainted with English, he did not think it necessary to bring an interpreter with him. Accordingly, I looked forward to the interview without anxiety. The

Japanese warrior, clad in a resplendent uniform, his breast ablaze with stars, entered the room, accompanied by a staff equally smart and scarcely less gorgeous. The General, then, after a lengthy clearing of the throat, which appeared to suggest bronchial disorder of a very acute description, gave vent to these words :

“My Imperial Master——”

This was followed by prolonged and guttural mouthing, of which the following is an attempt at a phonetic reproduction :

“G-h-u-r-m-m-m-m!”

This lasted for the best part of half a minute, and was succeeded by complete silence. Three times (like the Chinese *Kowtow*) was this ritual repeated, without the slightest deviation either of form or sound. Realising that the Envoy had exhausted his powers, I bowed him politely out of the room.

Ten days later he came to thank me for his entertainment and to bid goodbye. There were the same staff, the same uniforms, the same preliminary and sepulchral salute. I waited for the compliments or the congratulations, or even for the farewells of my illustrious guest.

“My Imperial Master—G-h-u-r-m-m-m-m,” —three times repeated, was all that I obtained. Realising that there must be either some esoteric significance in this highly abbreviated formula, or that the General’s knowledge of the English language did not admit of more exuberant expression, I cordially shook hands and we parted the best of friends.



But if I had had an interpreter I might perhaps have learned a little more of what "My Imperial Master" had instructed his faithful lieutenant to say. As it was, the message was buried in eternal oblivion.

## THE VALLEY OF THE WATERFALLS



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WHEN Mr. Froude in 1885 reached San Francisco on his homeward journey from that voyage round the world, one result of which was the production of his book *Oceana*, he narrated that he was overwhelmed with advice on no account to miss an expedition to the Yosemite valley. Indeed, these warnings were pressed upon him, as he pathetically says, with "damnable iteration". No method could have been adopted less likely to quicken the curiosity or to arouse the concern of that implacable man. He confessed to a rooted aversion to going out of his way in order to see sights; and his books contained more than one illustration of the singular case with which he satisfied himself that some place or spectacle, which it would very likely have conflicted with his convenience to see, was therefore not worth seeing at all. *Non credo quia nolo* seems to have been his test of what was or was not worthy of examination. For instance, his desire to inspect the Sandwich Islands evaporated when it entailed leaving his steamer at Honolulu; and finding that his train only paused for half an hour at Salt Lake City, he "did not care to observe Mormonism any closer" than from the precincts of the railway station. To the same mental listlessness we owe



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his refusal to visit the Yosemite valley ; a decision to be regretted, not so much for the loss to himself of an emotion against which he might have rebelled, but which he must have enjoyed, as for the sake of the reading public who were thus robbed of a description of one of the greatest masterpieces of Nature by one of the greatest masters of English prose.

Not till 1851 did the foot of the white man first enter the Yosemite. Long before, perhaps for centuries, it had formed a secure retreat for Indian tribes, who in the pathless glens and gorges of the Sierras conducted an internecine tribal warfare, or pursued an animal quarry scarcely wilder than themselves. It was by collision with these very Indians that the beautiful valley accidentally became known to the pioneers of what we call Western civilisation, who at the beginning of the second half of this century poured into California in the mad thirst for gold, sowing in rapacity and lust and crime the seeds from which civilisation and religion, too often begotten in a like stormy travail, were at a later date to spring.

At first the Indians did not recognise as enemies the scattered groups of gold-diggers who suddenly alighted upon their borders. But when the groups became a swarm, overspreading the country with lawless violence and sweeping all before them, jealousy and recrimination set in. These strained relations presently culminated in an attack by the Indians upon a trading-camp at Fresno and the massacre of all the whites there assembled. This was in December 1850. A company of volunteers







was immediately raised among the traders for purposes of self-protection, retaliation, and revenge; but the evil grew so rapidly that more authoritative measures became necessary. Accordingly in January 1851, by order of the Governor of the state, a company of two hundred able-bodied militia was enrolled, J. D. Savage, the owner of the trading-station originally destroyed, being elected the first commander. Recognising, however, the justice of the irritation naturally felt by the Indians at the invasion of their patrimony, and anxious at all hazards to preserve peace, the Government very wisely despatched emissaries among the surrounding tribes, with power to negotiate and distribute gifts; while they set apart a Reserve territory for such Indians as should be found amenable to these pacifying influences. Still there were some who held out, the principal of them being a tribe who were vaguely reported as dwelling in a deep rocky valley to the north-east. Communication was opened with them, and their chief was summoned and came to a "palaver". But the requisite assurances not being obtainable, the order to advance was at length given, and the expedition set out in quest of the mysterious retreat.

It was on May 6, 1851, that from the mountains on the south there burst upon the astonished gaze of the soldiers of the Mariposa Battalion the first sight of the enchanted valley. They gave to it the name Yo-Semite from that of the tribe, the Yo-Semites, or Grizzly Bears, by whom it was inhabited; abandoning the beautiful name of Ah-wah-nee, or

the Broad Cañon, by which it had been known in the Indian vocabulary. The difficulty with the Indians was soon at an end, and the war, before it had lasted six months, was concluded in July 1851. It was a curious sequel to the pacific termination of the struggle that the leaders on both sides, J. D. Savage and the Indian Chief Ten-ie-ya, each met at a later date with a violent death, the one at the hand of a fellow-white, the other in a foray with a neighbouring Indian tribe.

The discovery of the valley was not followed by an immediate accession of visitors. It was not till four years later that a small body of enterprising men, who had heard the tales circulated by the disbanded militiamen, resolved to make another expedition to the deserted gorge. Meanwhile, there having been no communication in the interim, the trails through the forest had been obliterated and the memory of the militiamen had grown dim. Nor was it till some Indians had been procured as guides from the Reserve, that this pioneer party of tourists was enabled to make its way to the coveted destination. To any one acquainted with the natural features of this Californian scenery—an immense sweep of lofty mountains intersected by ravines and clothed with a dense forest-growth—the long seclusion of the valley, and the difficulty in re-discovering it even when already discovered, will not appear a matter of surprise.

From this expedition, which was thoroughly successful, and by whose members many of the names were given by which the mountains and waterfalls

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are now known, may be dated the opening of the Yosemite valley to travellers and tourists. In the first ten years it only attracted 650 visitors. When I was there in 1887 the number had risen to 43,000, of whom 1200 were Englishmen. It must now be far above 100,000.

There yet remained one step before this splendid acquisition could be turned to real account, with a double regard for its own priceless security and for the free but orderly enjoyment of the public. The Government of the United States, which has never been behindhand in acts of similar liberal and far-seeing policy (for there may be statesmanship even in landscape-gardening), took up the question in 1864. In the session of that year a bill for the public dedication of the Yosemite valley was passed without demur by both Chambers of Congress. In this Bill, which was approved on June 30, 1864, it was declared:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, that there shall be and is hereby granted to the State of California the cleft or gorge in the granite peak of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, situated in the county of Mariposa in the State aforesaid, and the headwaters of the Merced River, and known as the Yosemite Valley, with its branches or spurs in estimated length fifteen miles, and in average width one mile back from the main edge of the precipice on each side of the valley; with the stipulation, nevertheless, that the said State shall accept this grant upon the express condition that the premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation; and shall be inalienable for all time.

Then followed a similar provision for the neighbouring Mariposa Big Tree Grove.

The valley and its surroundings having thus solemnly been handed over to the state of California, the Governor of that state forthwith appointed a Board of Commissioners for the due administration of the Trust, an act which in 1866 received the confirmation of the Senate and Assembly of the same state. The whole machinery was thus set in working order ; and by the Board so nominated the valley is guarded and governed to this day.

And now if any one were to ask me, " What is the Yosemite valley, and what are its peculiar features ? " I would briefly answer as follows : One hundred and fifty miles nearly due east of San Francisco, where the middle ranges of the Sierra Nevada rise from the San Joaquin valley in grand wooded outlines, sweep upon sweep, to a height of 13,000 feet above the sea, there is hewn from east to west a profound ravine between two confronting barriers of precipitous rock. Over a space varying from three-quarters of a mile to two miles in width, and along a line some six miles in extent, these grim natural fortifications look out at each other and down upon a peaceful valley slumbering in the deep trench, three-quarters of a mile in sheer depth below. Many English persons are familiar with the noble spectacle presented by the northern front of the Rock of Gibraltar, on the side where a perpendicular face of rock, 1200 feet high, towers gloriously above the flat space known as the Neutral Ground. Conceive this cliff trebled in height, Pelion piled on Ossa and

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Olympus on both, extended over a line twice the length of the Long Walk in Windsor Park, and confronted at the varying distances I have named by another wall of like character and similar dimensions ; conceive these parallel rocky walls, while retaining their uniform abruptness and height, to be shaped into stormy outlines of towers and pinnacles and domes ; conceive further the intervening space to be sown with great trees and flowering shrubs, a paltry plantation when viewed from above, but a mighty forest-growth below, and to be traversed by the coils of a winding river ; conceive, I say, this startling combination of features, and we shall still have but a dim and inadequate likeness of the Yosemite valley.

But what is perhaps the chief characteristic remains to be told. In the number and height and splendour of its waterfalls lies its distinction from all other remarkable valleys, so far as I know, in the world.

Straight over these mountain walls, not down the bed of converging ravines, but from upland valleys and lakes unseen above and beyond, come toppling the heaven-sent waters that supply the shining River of Mercy (Rio de la Merced) murmuring so musically below. Almost may we say :

Not in entire forgetfulness  
And not in utter nakedness  
But trailing clouds of glory do they come  
From God who is our home.

For as with a rush and a leap, as seen from below, they spring from the craggy ledges, their forms are

intertwined with rainbows and aureoled with light. So they descend, soft vaporous shapes, spray-clad, that glimmer along the aerial stairway like spirits passing up and down a Jacob's ladder from heaven to earth, until the phantasy is shivered in the tumult and thunder of the plunge upon the echoing platform or in the deep hollow pools at the base. From a distance of miles these waterfalls may be seen hung like white banners against the mountain-walls. Even there a faint whisper sings in the air, deepening as we advance to a hum and a roar, till about their feet the atmosphere is filled and choked with the stunning shocks of sound.

They vary considerably in height, being sometimes intercepted in their descent or broken up into more than one cascade. The height of the highest or upper Yosemite fall is 1600 feet; but this is the uppermost of a trio of cascades, one above the other, the united fall of which amounts to nearly 2600 feet, and when seen from a distance can be mistaken for a single uninterrupted fall.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably, too, but unfortunately, they vary in volume according to the season of the year, the depth of rainfall, and the duration of the winter snows. In the early spring, when the feeders are full, each brook becomes a torrent and each fall a cataract. Then the Yosemite is pre-eminently a Valley of Waterfalls; for not a mile of its rocky palisades can be passed but there comes foaming from the sky a precipitous

<sup>1</sup> The uppermost fall, as has been said, is 1600 feet; then follows a rush along a rocky shelf, with a further descent of over 600 feet; the final plunge is 400 feet. The Vernal Falls are 400 feet deep. The Nevada Fall, which when in spate is one of the most beautiful and imposing, is 640 feet.

shoot of what looks like molten snow. But in the late summer the bulk is often sadly diminished; the brooks dwindle into rills, and the watery fleecy become ribands and wisps and threads, fluttering feebly and forlornly down the stained tracks of their lost spring-glory.

Of these falls perhaps the most beautiful at all times and seasons is that to which the pioneer tourists of 1855 gave the name of the Bridal Veil. It falls sheer for 900 feet, the rocky rim from which it leaps being outlined as sharply as a razor's edge against the sky. The name is not ill-applied, for as the breeze catches the descending jets, when not in full volume, it puffs them outwards from the rock and wafts them in gauzy festoons from side to side. Hither and thither float the misty folds like a diaphanous veil of tulle. Lower down, the water, pouring in miniature cataracts from the ledges, alone shows what is the quantity and what the texture of the material. The Indian name for this waterfall was Pohono, or the Spirit of the Evil Wind. They connected with it some mysterious and baleful influence, hearing the mutter of spirit-voices in the sound, and scenting the cold breath of a destroying angel in the breeze of the enchanted fall. To pass by it was of ill omen, to sleep near it was perilous, to point the finger of scorn at it was death. An Indian woman, who once fell from the slippery ledge at the top and was dashed to pieces, was believed to have been swept away by the Evil One. Unlike the artistic though rationalising temper of the ancient Greeks, who recognised in the legendary carrying off



of Orithyia by Boreas, the North Wind, the metaphor of a tempestuous love, the Indian mind, plunged in sad superstition, could see nothing in a similar fatality but the revengeful finger of doom. This is not the only case in which we cannot help regretting the substitution of a modern for the more significant or traditional Indian name. No great propriety and still less originality was shown in the selection of such titles as the Riband, the Vernal, and the Nevada. How much prettier, in meaning if not in sound, were Lung-oo-too-koo-yah, the Graceful and Slender One ; Pi-wy-ack, the Shower of Diamonds ; Yo-wi-ye, the Twisting One ; and Tulu-la-wiack, the Rush of Waters. Gladly, too, would we see Mirror Lake reconverted into Ke-ko-too-yem, the Sleeping Water.

The Indian imagination seems to have been more poetically excited by waterfalls than by mountains ; for the names which they gave to the latter were in some cases fantastic and less worthy of appropriation. The two extraordinary rocks on the southern side of the valley, which from their shape and juxtaposition are aptly called the Cathedral Spires,—being indeed as like the west front of a Gothic minster as the architecture of nature could be expected to model them—were known to the Indians as Poo-see-na Chuck-ka, the Acorn Baskets, from the receptacle of that name, shaped like an inverted cone, which is carried on their backs by the Indian women. The three pointed rocks on the other side of the valley, now called the Three Brothers, were Pom-pom-pa-sa, or the Jumping Frogs. The Sen-

tinell Rock was Loya, from a plant growing near at hand. The Sentinel Dome was Ho-ko-owa, or the Lizard, from a dark lizard-shaped stain in the rock. The North Dome—that curious smooth cupola of granite that overhangs the entrance to the northernmost of the two eastern forks—was To-coy-a, from the covering over the face of a papoose carried in its basket-cradle on its mother's back. More fitly the Half Dome—most prominent of all the giants of the valley, being as its name implies a great bald hump of rock (4800 feet above the valley floor and 9000 above the sea) smooth and rounded on one side, but suddenly cleft in twain through the middle, as though by the slash of some Titan's axe—was named by the Indians Tis-sa-ack, the Goddess of the Valley. Finally, El Capitan (a name given by the Mission Indians who had borrowed it from the Spanish padres), that magnificent bluff, so familiar from a hundred photographs and sketches, which stands like a sturdy warder at the western threshold of the valley, was known as Tu-tock-ah-nu-lah, the Great Guardian Deity.

There is another respect, besides the waterfalls, in which the late summer and autumn in the Yosemite are the sufferers to the gain of the spring. This is in the matter of vegetation. At all times a rich forest-growth adorns the valley; and it is only by comparison with the celebrated Big Trees (*Sequoia gigantea*) that grow in the neighbourhood some thirty miles away, and are usually visited in the course of the same expedition, that these noble Yosemite stems, 170 to 220 feet high, straight as an obelisk

and tall as a tower, are not considered giants in the land.

The roadway winds in and out of the solemn sylvan aisles, the light scarcely breaking through the clustered leafy capitals and shedding itself in dust of gold upon the big cones and needles that litter the forest floor. Here are yellow pines and sugar pines, the red or incense cedar, the Douglas spruce, and three varieties of silver fir. Here, too, are the more familiar figures of the common oak and the evergreen oak, the quaking aspen and the willow, alders, poplars, maples, and laurel. The majority of these continue their bounty right through the summer; but it is in the undergrowth and shrubs and flowers that the visitor in the spring finds such an additional delight. Then the open spaces are gay with the festal bloom of the manzanita, with azaleas, yellow and white and pink, with the soft plumes of the Californian lilac, with dogwood and primroses, with the syringa, the butterfly tulip, and the white lily. The trails are bright with their colours and sweet with their fragrance, and all nature smiles.

Being even at its base as much as 4000 feet above the sea, the Yosemite valley enjoys a very equable temperature, the thermometer seldom pointing to more than 86° in summer. The orientation of the cutting is, moreover, the source of a twofold charm. Running, as the valley does, almost due east and west, the sea-breezes that pour in at the Golden Gate come swiftly over the intervening plains and blow an incessant draught from end to end of the gorge.



HONOLULU OF IHL SIOKNI GODS YOSEMITL VALLLY



To the same accident of site we owe the splendours of sunrise and sunset. Did the valley face north and south, one face of it would be perpetually in shadow. As it is, when the morning sun has topped the eastern heights, its rays run swiftly from peak to peak right down the full length of the ravine, which in a few moments is flooded with the golden glory. Similarly as the declining orb sinks opposite the western doorway, both faces of rock, from El Capitan to the Half Dome, attend the dying couch and are gilded with the vanishing beam.

If it be asked in what special features, other than the broad structural outlines which have already been described, the wonder of the Yosemite consists, I would reply, in the solemn uniformity of colouring, in the nakedness of the rocky fronts, and in the absolutely vertical cleavage from cap to base. There is none of that gorgeous variety of colouring that results from different rock-strata, or, as in the famous cañon of the Yellowstone, from the chemical action of mineral deposits and boiling springs. The rock is everywhere an ashen grey granite, which in places where the surface layer has scaled off becomes a pale, or under the sunlight a glittering, white. Only here and there, where through the long years streams too thin to make a waterfall have trickled down the bare face, are black splashes and streaks like the dishevelled tresses of a woman's hair. But the very absence of variety, the gleaming monochrome of stone, has an indefinable grandeur of its own, and strikes the spectator from below with a peculiar awe. The two other features I have men-

tioned are closely connected ; for it is the verticality of the cliffs that is responsible for the almost total absence of vegetation upon their faces. Now and then a solitary pine has secured a precarious foothold upon some tiny ledge ; but for the most part not even nature is allowed to plant an excrescence. Where the sheer walls are interspersed with slopes, these lend whatever of contrast and colour may be needed, being sufficiently clad with undergrowth and shrubs.

If a single point be named from which a finer view than elsewhere can be obtained, to the rocky height known as Glacier Point should be conceded the honour. It is 3257 feet in sheer height above the valley, which here expands to its greatest width. From east to west its length is laid bare, even to the end of the forks into which it bifurcates at the eastern extremity, and the most important waterfalls are all in view. A big stone pitched from the summit will not strike the rock till sixteen seconds have been counted, and then at a considerable distance from the bottom. A tale is told in one of the guide-books of an antique hen which, for the satisfaction of a party of visitors, was tossed over the precipitous bluff. Down and ever down sank the hapless fowl till it became a tiny ball of feathers, then a speck, and finally vanished altogether in the abyss. The spectators, somewhat chagrined at this gratuitous sacrifice of animal life, ventured upon a remonstrance, but were met with the cheerful reply, "Don't be alarmed about that chicken, ladies ! She's used to it. She goes over that cliff every day

during the season." The story goes on to relate that the same party, descending the cliff in the course of the afternoon, encountered the old hen, uninjured, composedly ascending the trail.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the formation of this remarkable valley. There is one school of geologists who believe it to have arisen, or rather sunk, from a subsidence in the soil between the rocky walls. Others have argued that it is a fissure cleft by volcanic action in the very core of the granite. Were not both these theories unsupported either by local or collateral evidence, there is yet that in the valley itself which testifies irresistibly to a different origin. The mysterious handwriting of Nature is engraven upon the crags; and we must believe that the Yosemite, like many another deep valley and grim gorge, has been fashioned by the gigantic agencies of frost and ice. On the northern wall may be traced in many places the print of icy fingers, those unmistakable lateral striations that show where the remorseless touch has passed. The rounded surface of the domes, the polished faces of rock, the burnished recumbent boulders, the evidence of summits and sides and base, all tell the same tale. In the northern fork, near the Mirror Lake, may be seen heaps of colossal debris which, detached from the Half Dome, have slid down some prehistoric ice-slope and have been deposited, not at the foot of the precipice from which they fell, but on the opposite side of the ravine. In more than one place are palpable relics of vast glacial moraines. There cannot be much doubt that at some remote period



(we need not attempt to estimate when) the entire valley from roof to floor was packed with a huge ice-field, over a mile and a half in depth, that easily overlapped the rim and extended to the summits of the adjacent and superior heights. Then when the age of disintegration set in, how mightily must the giant fingers have torn and wrenched, have split and riven, have scraped and ground ! What a work of cleaving precipices and snapping projections, of crushing obstacles and pulverising fragments ! With what superhuman strength was the great plough-share driven through the heart of the everlasting hills ! We crawl like ants in the furrow, happy if in our day some Daniel arises to interpret to us the mystic handwriting on the wall.

HUDSON LOWE v. WALKER



HUDSON LOWE *v.* WALKER  
*RE* LIBRARY TABLE OF NAPOLEON

*Tantaene animis caelestibus irae.*  
VIRGIL.

WHEN I was in St. Helena in 1908 I spent some time in examining the Government Records in the Castle at Jamestown, where are stored many shelf-fuls of bound documents, official papers, MSS., and the like, dating from the times when the island was in the hands of the East India Company. Several of these relate to the period (1815–1821) of the Emperor Napoleon's residence at St. Helena. The contents of a few only have ever been made public. One among the large unpublished majority, a folio MS. of no fewer than 258 pages, which has hitherto escaped notice, contains the narrative of an amazing dispute that went on furiously for the best part of three years between Sir Hudson Lowe, the retired Governor, and his successor Brigadier-General A. Walker, requiring, before it was settled, the intervention of the East India Company, the Colonial Office, Members of Council, and indeed almost every person, high or low, who had had any connection with the Emperor's sojourn at Longwood. It all arose out of a claim to the possession of the mahogany

library table which had stood in the Emperor's sitting-room or study and had been in constant use by the illustrious exile. The fight for this piece of furniture appears to have excited the worst passions of both combatants, and indicates the sort of dementia that seems to have overcome almost every one who was associated with the last hours of Napoleon. It also illustrates the fever with which, after his death, every one pounced upon any relic of the great man who had lived for six pitiful years in their midst.

Napoleon died on 5th May 1821. On 27th May the whole of his household embarked for England. On 25th July Sir Hudson Lowe sailed from the island. The furniture of the three houses which had been appropriated to the use of the exiles, *i.e.* Old Longwood (the residence of Napoleon and the majority of his suite), New Longwood (prepared and equipped for, but never occupied by, him), and the house of Count Bertrand, was put up for sale by auction. This furniture did not (with the exception of certain articles brought by Napoleon from France which were taken away by his followers) belong to the Emperor, but was the property of the British Government, who had provided it for the use of the party, and who, when it was no longer required for that purpose, ordered its sale. The auction took place at Jamestown under the instructions of Assistant Commissary-General Denzil Ibbetson, on a succession of dates between the 26th March and the 8rd June 1822, the total sum realised being nearly £8000, exclusive of certain reserved items. It was

about one of the latter that the undignified squabble arose.

When the inventory of the Longwood furniture was made, immediately after the death of the Emperor, Sir Hudson Lowe, acting with perfect propriety, and intending to obtain, as he subsequently did obtain, the sanction of the Colonial Office, set aside eleven cases, containing a number of articles which he desired to purchase himself at the official valuation. The most prized of them was the library table which was valued at £40, out of a total for the entire eleven cases of £352 : 15s. Lowe had contemplated taking the whole of this consignment with him when he left, but the cases were too big to be accommodated on board his ship ; so they were left behind to be despatched later. He thought, however, that the library table had been put on board, but in this he was mistaken.

Somewhat later the new Governor, General A. Walker, arrived, and finding the cases still in store, and, to use his own words, regarding it as "hardly possible to avoid a participation in the general sentiment of possessing some article which had been the property of that extraordinary personage", he decided to purchase the articles which he particularly coveted, including the library table. Further, in order to make certain that he was not baulked of his spoil, he had the library table and two small book-cases packed up and despatched at once to his home in Scotland. At the same time he fortified himself by securing a Minute in his favour from his two Members of Council, Messrs. Brooke and Greentree,

to whom he appears to have quite misrepresented the situation. His action, in fact, was both disingenuous and dishonest; and in the correspondence which ensued he exhibited, with an uncommon flow of invective, the most intense personal dislike of Sir Hudson Lowe.

Meanwhile the latter, as soon as he discovered what had happened, mobilised—in support of his claim—all the resources of the Colonial Office, his own unquestioned rights, and a vocabulary not inferior to that of his rival; and for the best part of two years the verbal duel went on. It was settled at last by a letter dated 17th March 1825 from the East India Company to the Colonial Office in which they said :

The Court of Directors are of opinion that at the time of the general sale, the articles claimed were set apart to be taken by Sir Hudson Lowe at a valuation subject to the approbation of His Majesty's Government, that so far as regards the library table, such approbation was obtained before the 30th April 1822; and although as regards the remainder Lord Bathurst's acquiescence was not received until 21st March 1823, yet as the articles were selected and valued before the passing of the Act (July 1822) which gave the Company all Government property remaining at St. Helena, the Court would not deem it right to disturb that arrangement.

Therefore the Court will instruct General Walker to transfer the whole of the articles (including those sent to England) to Sir Hudson Lowe, on the latter paying the value into the Company's Treasury at St. Helena.

The Court then proceeded to censure General Walker for his lack of "sufficient caution in his

statements", and for "a mode of expression altogether unsuited to official correspondence".

At the same time, having thus decided on the merits of the case against their own officer, they did not mean to let off his successful rival, of whom they declared that he had "pursued an equally objectionable course", and that many passages in his observations "entitled him to animadversions quite as severe as those which the conduct of General Walker had appeared to call for".

Sir Hudson Lowe answered in a letter dated 10th April 1825, in which he defended himself with dignity against the charges of the Company concerning his epistolary style and tone, thanked the Court for their decision, and added that he surrendered his claim to all the furniture except the library table and the two book-cases, which he desired should be offered to his friend Brigadier-General Coffin. Presumably in the possession of that officer's descendant, these disputed trophies, if their identity has not been lost, may still be found.

There cannot, I think, be a doubt that in this rather squalid controversy over Napoleon's furniture, just as in the larger controversy over Napoleon himself, Sir Hudson Lowe was fundamentally in the right. At the same time he had the knack of doing the right thing in a very clumsy and irritating way, and he has accordingly gone down to history as the classical example of the square man in the round hole, who even when he was right, as he usually was, succeeded in making people annoyed that he was not wrong.